

THE UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
LIBRARY



THE WILMER COLLECTION
OF CIVIL WAR NOVELS
PRESENTED BY
RICHARD H. WILMER, JR.



186

WILMER COLLECTION

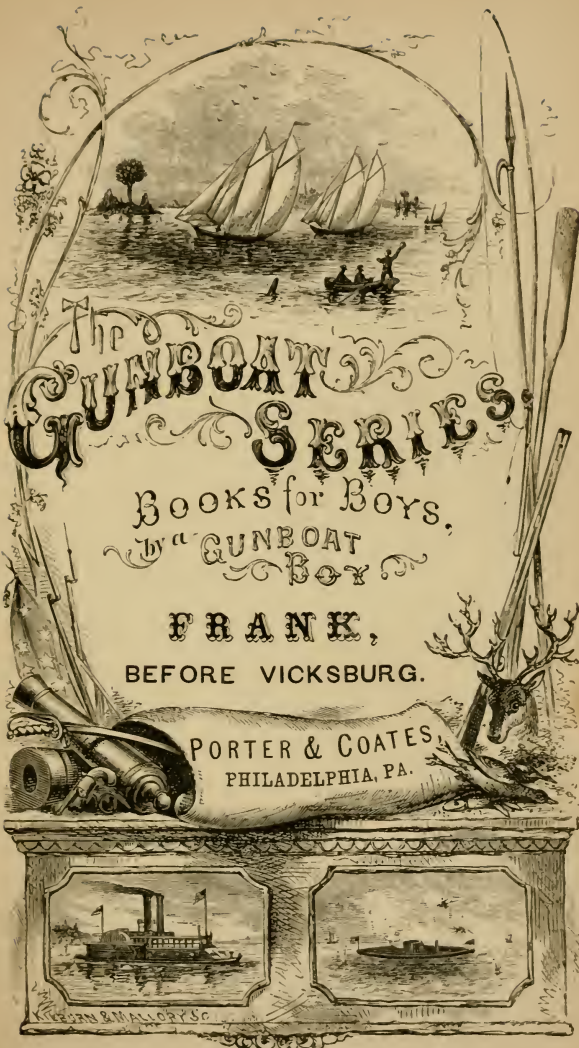
Eddie

from

Grand

Christmas 1888.





The GUNBOAT SERIES.

BOOKS for BOYS,
by a GUNBOAT
BOY.

FRANK,
BEFORE VICKSBURG.

PORTER & COATES,
PHILADELPHIA, PA.



PORTER & COATES

THE GUN-BOAT SERIES.

FRANK

BEFORE VICKSBURG

BY

HARRY CASTLEMON,

AUTHOR OF "THE ROCKY MOUNTAIN SERIES," "THE GO-AHEAD
SERIES," ETC.



PHILADELPHIA:
PORTER & COATES.
CINCINNATI, O.:
R. W. CARROLL & CO.

FAMOUS CASTLEMON BOOKS.

GUNBOAT SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 6 vols. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

FRANK THE YOUNG NATURALIST. FRANK ON A GUNBOAT. FRANK IN THE WOODS. FRANK BEFORE VICKSBURG. FRANK ON THE LOWER MISSISSIPPI. FRANK ON THE PRAIRIE.

ROCKY MOUNTAIN SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 3 vols. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

FRANK AMONG THE RANCHEROS.
FRANK AT DON CARLOS' RANCHO.
FRANK IN THE MOUNTAINS.

SPORTSMAN'S CLUB SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 3 vols. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

THE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB IN THE SADDLE.
THE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB AFLOAT.
THE SPORTSMAN'S CLUB AMONG THE TRAPPERS.

GO-AHEAD SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 3 vols. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

TOM NEWCOMBE. GO-AHEAD. NO MOSS.

FRANK NELSON SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 3 vols. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

SNOWED UP. FRANK IN THE FORECASTLE. BOY TRADERS.

BOY TRAPPER SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 3 vols. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

THE BURIED TREASURE; OR, OLD JORDAN'S HAUNT.
THE BOY TRAPPER; OR, HOW DAVE FILLED THE ORDER.
THE MAIL-CARRIER.

ROUGHING IT SERIES. By HARRY CASTLEMON. Illustrated. 16mo. Cloth, extra, black and gold.

GEORGE IN CAMP.

Other Volumes in Preparation.

Entered according to Act of Congress, in the year 1864, by
R. W. CARROLL & CO.,

In the Clerk's Office of the District Court of the United States,
for the Southern District of Ohio.

Contents.

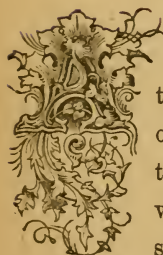
	PAGE
CHAPTER I.	
HOME AGAIN.....	7
CHAPTER II.	
HARRY ON A SCOUT.....	23
CHAPTER III.	
ON DUTY AGAIN.....	33
CHAPTER IV.	
THE FIGHT IN THE WOODS.....	60
CHAPTER V.	
IN THE HANDS OF THE "JOHNNIES" AGAIN.....	80
CHAPTER VI.	
AN OLD ACQUAINTANCE.....	96
CHAPTER VII.	
A CLOSE SHAVE.....	111
CHAPTER VIII.	
TAKING DOWN THE CAPTAIN.....	126
CHAPTER IX.	
A PRACTICAL JOKE.....	144
CHAPTER X.	
NEW MESSMATES.....	153
CHAPTER XI.	
A GOOD NIGHT'S WORK.....	162

	PAGE
CHAPTER XII.	
IN THE TRENCHES	183
CHAPTER XIII.	
THE SCOUT'S STORY.....	194
CHAPTER XIV.	
RUNNING THE BATTERIES.....	208
CHAPTER XV.	
A RACE FOR THE OLD FLAG.....	213
CHAPTER XVI.	
THE RIVAL SHARP-SHOOTERS.....	227
CHAPTER XVII.	
THE SMUGGLER'S CAVE—CONCLUSION.....	249

FRANK BEFORE VICKSBURG.

CHAPTER I.

Home Again.



AFTER all the tragic adventures which Frank Nelson had passed through, since entering the service of his country, which we have attempted to describe in the preceding volume of this series, he found himself surrounded by his relatives and friends, petted and fêted, enjoying all the comforts of his old and well-beloved home.

Only those who have been in similar circumstances can imagine how pleasant that quiet little cottage seemed to Frank, after the scenes of danger through which he had passed. He looked back to the memorable struggle between the

lines; the scene in the turret during the first day's fight at Fort Pemberton; the privations he had undergone while confined in the prison at Shreveport; his almost miraculous escape; and they seemed to him like a dream. All his sufferings were forgotten in the joy he felt at finding himself once more at home. But sorrow was mingled with his joy when he looked upon the weeds which his mother wore, and when he saw the look of sadness which had taken the place of her once happy smile. She seemed ten years older than she looked on that pleasant morning, just fifteen months before, when, standing in the door, she had strained her son to her bosom, and uttered those words which had rung in Frank's ears whenever he felt himself about to give away to his feelings of terror:

"Good-by, my son; I may never see you again, but I hope I shall never hear that you shrank from your duty."

Frank shuddered when he thought how intense must have been the suffering that could work so great a change. But now that he was safe at home again, there was no cause but for rejoicing. His presence there afforded abundant proof that

RBI
NCH

he had *not* been shot while attempting to run the guards at Shreveport, as had been reported.

And how great must have been the joy which that mother felt at beholding him once more! Although he did not move about the house in his accustomed noisy, boyish way, and although his cheek had been paled by his recent sickness, from which he had not yet wholly recovered, he was still the same lively, generous Frank whom she had so freely given up to the service of his country. During the short time that they had been separated, he had been placed in situations where his courage and determination had been severely tested, and had come safely through, never forgetting his mother's advice; and that mother could not suppress the emotions of pride that arose in her heart, for she knew that her son had done his duty.

Numerous were the questions that were asked and answered, on both sides. Frank was obliged to relate, over and over again, the story of his capture and escape, until Aunt Hannah thrust her head into the room, with the announcement that supper was ready.

When the meal was finished, Frank removed his

trunk into his study. Every thing there was just as he left it: the fore-and-aft schooner, and the box inclosing the scene at sea, still stood upon the bureau; his sporting cabinet hung on the frame at the foot of the bed; the little clock on the mantel-piece ticked as musically as in days of yore; and the limb of the rose-bush that covered his window flapped against the house just as it did the night when it was broken off by the storm.

After he had taken a fond, lingering look at each familiar object, he went into the museum, accompanied by his mother and sister, while Brave ran on before. Julia opened the door, and there stood the wild-cat, just as he looked when the young naturalist had encountered him in the woods. Frank remembered how the cold sweat had started out from every pore in his body when he first found himself face to face with this "ugly customer," and he could not help smiling when he thought how terrified he was. As he walked slowly around the museum, examining all the specimens, as though he had never seen them before, he thought over the little history of each. There was the buck that he and Archie had killed

in the lake, when they lost their guns, and the latter had wished they "had never seen the deer." Then came the owl, which Frank had shot on that rainy morning when Archie had felt so certain of his prize. Then there was the white buck, which the boys had rescued from the wolves only to have him killed by a panther. Next came the moose with which Frank had struggled so desperately in the woods, and from which he had been rescued by the trapper and his dog. The skin of the bear, which he had trapped, and followed to the cave, and that of the panther that killed the white buck, still hung on a nail behind the door, where he had left them after his return from the woods.

After examining every thing to his satisfaction, he went into the shanty behind the museum, where he kept his pets. The raccoons, which had become so tame that Julia allowed them to run about, started away at his approach; but the squirrels and otter recognized him at once; and while one ran down into his pockets in search for nuts, the other came toward him, uttering a faint whine, and looked up as if expecting the piece of cracker which Frank, in former days, had always

taken especial care to provide for him. While Frank was caressing the little animal, the king-birds and crow flew into the shanty. The former were now five in number, the old birds having raised a nestful of young ones, which were no less efficient in driving every bird from the orchard, or less lenient to the crow, than their parents. The old king-birds lit on Frank's shoulders, while Daw seemed to prefer his master's uniform cap, and was about to take possession of it, when his enemies straightway commenced a fight, and the poor crow, after a desperate resistance, was driven from the shanty.

Perhaps the reader would like to know what has become of the young moose and the cubs which Frank captured during his visit at the trapper's cabin. Well, they have good quarters, and are well provided for at Uncle Mike's, the same who assisted the young naturalist on the morning when we saw him trying to get his scow up to his work-shop. The moose has about an acre of pasture allowed him. He is as tame and gentle as ever, never attempting to escape. Uncle Mike has put this entirely out of his power, for he is surrounded by a ten-rail fence. The animal

more than pays for his keeping, and many a load of wood has he drawn up to Mike's door for the use of his family.

The cubs, which are considerably larger than when we last saw them, are a source of a great deal of annoyance to the honest Irishman. They are still as playful as ever, and amuse themselves all day long in turning somersaults and wrestling with each other; but Mike has learned to "stand from under." He can generally defend himself against the attacks of one of the cubs, but the other is always ready to lend assistance, and the Irishman is invariably worsted. He keeps them confined in a building that once served as a smoke-house; and not daring to trust himself within reach of their paws, he gives them their food through the window.

It was dark before Frank had seen and heard enough to satisfy him to return to the cottage. The evening was spent in listening to his stories of gun-boat life on the Mississippi, and it was midnight before he retired to his room. The Newfoundlander, which had been close at his master's side ever since he returned, scarcely leaving him for a moment, followed him into his study,

and took possession of the rug before the door. After winding up the clock that stood on the mantel, and setting the alarm, Frank put out the light, and tumbled into bed. Although he was pretty well tired-out, he did not hesitate a moment to answer the summons of the little bell that rang at four o'clock, but was out on the floor almost before the notes of the alarm had ceased. In a few moments he was dressed; and taking his fish-pole and basket, which hung on the rack at the foot of the bed, accompanied by Brave, set out with the intention of paying a visit to the lake in the swamp, which had been the scene of the fight with the buck.

As he walked along up the road, the associations connected with each locality were recalled to his mind. Here was the place where the black fox, which had so long held possession of Reynard's Island, had crossed the creek with Sport—"the dog that had never lost a fox"—following close on his trail. There was the tree leaning out over the creek, behind which Archie had crept for concealment when in pursuit of the canvas-backs; and a little further on was the bridge which they had crossed on that rainy

morning that the geese had taken refuge in the swamp.

Frank feasted his eyes on each familiar object as he walked along, until he arrived at the end of the road, where stood Uncle Mike's rustic cottage. As he approached, that individual appeared at the door, shaded his eyes with his hand, gazed at our hero for a moment, and then sprang out, and greeted him with—

“Arrah, Master Frank! is this you, me boy?”

“Yes, Uncle Mike, it's I,” answered Frank, extending his hand to the man, who shook it heartily, while tears of genuine joy rolled down his cheeks. “I'm back again, safe and sound.”

“It's me ownsilf that's glad to see you,” said Mike. “I heered you was kilt intirely by the rebels; bad luck to the likes o' them. But come with me, Master Frank; ye's been fightin' rebels, but I've been fighting them varmints ye ketched in the woods.”

The Irishman led the way to the building in which the cubs were confined, and opened the blind which protected the window, to allow Frank to look in. He could scarcely recognize in the large, shaggy forms that were tumbling about

over the floor, the small, weak cubs which he had carried for twenty miles in the pocket of his overcoat.

As soon as the window was opened, they raised themselves on their haunches, and endeavored to reach Uncle Mike's red-flannel cap, an article he had worn ever since Frank could remember.

"Aisy, aisy, there, you blackguards!" exclaimed Mike, endeavoring to ward off the blows which the cubs aimed at him. "Can't yees be aisy, I say? That's the way they always do, Master Frank; me old cap seems to give 'em a deal of throuble."

After amusing himself for some time in watching the motions of the clumsy animals, Frank followed Uncle Mike to the pen in which the moose was kept. He had grown finely, was nearly as large as a horse, and his head was furnished with a pair of wide-spreading antlers, the sight of which made Frank shudder, and recall to mind that desperate fight in the woods, and his narrow escape from death. The moose was very gentle, and allowed his young master to lead him about the yard, and would come at his call as readily as a dog.

After seeing the animal "shown off" to his best advantages, Frank got into Uncle Mike's skiff, and pulled up the creek toward the lake. Half an hour's rowing brought him to the point behind which he and his cousin had captured the eider-ducks, and where they had first caught sight of the buck. After making his skiff fast to a tree on the bank, he rigged his pole, baited his hook, and dropped it into the water. Almost instantly a sudden jerk showed him that the "old perch-hole" had still plenty of occupants, and in a moment more a fish lay floundering in the bottom of the boat.

We need not say that Frank enjoyed himself hugely during the hour and a half that he remained in the lake. The fish bit voraciously, and the sport was exciting, especially as it had been so long since Frank had had an opportunity to engage in his favorite recreation. But his conscience would not allow him to "wantonly waste the good things of God," and, when he had caught enough for his breakfast, he unfastened his skiff and pulled toward home.

Frank spent the forenoon in recounting some of his adventures to his mother and Julia, of

which they seemed never to grow weary. When Aunt Hannah announced that dinner was ready, he lingered for a moment on the portico to watch the movements of a flock of ducks, which, in company with the old ones, the same that he and Archie had captured in the lake, were swimming about in the creek in front of the house; but, as he was about to follow his mother into the dining-room, he heard a loud scream, which seemed to come from above him, and looked up just in time to see a bald eagle swoop down upon the ducks. The old ones uttered their notes of alarm, and, rising from the water, flew over the cottage toward the barn, while the ducklings darted under the leaves of the lilies. But one was too late; for, as the eagle arose in the air, he bore off his prize.

Frank immediately ran into the house for his gun, determined that the life of the eagle should pay for that of the duck; but on his return he found that the robber was already being severely punished for the mischief he had done. Daw and the king-birds, which seemed to have an idea that something unusual was going on, had attacked him with a fury that Frank had never

before witnessed. The eagle was flying, zigzag, through the air, but was met at every point by his tormentors. Frank, who dared not fire for fear of wounding his pets, ran down the walk, sprang over the fence, and awaited the issue of the fight, hoping that the eagle would be compelled to take refuge in one of the trees that grew on the bank of the creek. Nor was he mistaken; for the robber, finding that he could not escape his enemies, settled down on a limb but a short distance off, and, after deliberately folding his wings, snapped his beak, as if defying them to keep up the contest. The king-birds seated themselves on the branches above his head, and commenced their angry twittering, and Daw joined in with a loud "caw, caw."

This seemed to be the first intimation that the king-birds had received of his presence, for they straightway flew at him, and Daw, although he had lent effective assistance in fighting the eagle, did not stop to resist, but beat a hasty retreat toward the cottage. This seemed a favorable moment for the eagle; he leaped from his perch, and was flying off with his booty, when the report of Frank's gun brought him to the ground. The young nat-

uralist shouldered his prize, and was starting toward the house, when a voice called out:

“Halloo, there! At your old tricks again so soon?”

Frank looked up, and saw Harry Butler coming toward him. Neither had dreamed of the presence of the other in the village, and the cordial manner in which the two friends greeted each other proved that their long separation had not lessened their affection. But Frank noticed at once that his friend was greatly changed. He looked haggard and careworn; he was no longer the wild, impetuous Harry; he had grown more sedate; and his face, which had once beamed with a smile for every one, now wore a look of sorrow, for which Frank could not account. It is true that he noticed that Harry carried his arm in a sling, but he knew that it was not bodily suffering that had caused that look of sadness.

“Harry, what is the matter with you?” was his first question. “You look completely worn out.”

“So I am,” was the answer. “Let us sit down on this log, and I’ll tell you all about it. I’ve often been here to visit your folks,” he continued,

“never expecting to see you again, as I learned that you had been captured, and afterward shot, while trying to escape. You say I look worn out; so would you if your only brother was a prisoner in the hands of the rebels, held as a hostage, and every moment expecting to be hung. George is in that situation, and I look upon his death, not only as a possible, but a very probable thing. It has been a hard task for me to convince myself that, if I should live to return home after the war, I should be alone, as I certainly thought I should be when I heard that you had been shot, and that George was not much better off. I had made up my mind to pass my furlough in the house, for I didn’t want to have any one near me; but, now that you are here, I want to visit all our old haunts again. Let us take a walk in the woods. Bring your dinner along with you. I have n’t had mine yet.”

In accordance with Harry’s suggestion, a basket was filled with eatables, and the boys bent their steps through the orchard toward the meadow that lay between the cottage and the woods. As they walked along, Frank related some of the interesting incidents of his life in the

service, and Harry finally began to recover his usual spirits. At length they reached the cabin in the woods, that had been the scene of the camp on the day of the raccoon hunt, and here they stopped to rest and eat their dinner.

CHAPTER II.

Harry on a Scout.



WHEN they had finished every thing in the basket, the boys threw themselves on the grass in front of the cabin, and Harry said:

“I shall never forget the last time we made our camp here—on the day we had that ’coon-hunt, and Archie fell into the creek. I’ve thought of it a great many times since I left home to go into the service, and it makes me feel sad to see how things have changed. From school-boys and amateur hunters, who started and turned pale when we heard the howl of a wolf or the hooting of an owl, you and I have grown pretty well on toward manhood; have become experienced in scenes of danger, and have had more narrow escapes than when we climbed up that tree to get

out of the reach of the wolves that were in pursuit of the white buck. But there are some who have not been as fortunate as ourselves. There has been a thinning out of our ranks, and two good fellows who have hunted with us in these woods, and slept under the same blankets with us in this cabin, we shall never see again; and the probabilities are, that, if we live to return home again, after peace has been restored, and we go tramping around through these woods, to visit all our old hunting and fishing-grounds, we shall miss a third. Ben Lake and William Johnson are dead; my brother is suffering in a rebel prison, and, from what I have seen and heard of the manner in which Union prisoners are treated at the South, I never expect to see him again, even if he is not executed. Ben Lake, you know, was a quiet, good-natured fellow, scarcely ever saying anything unless he was first spoken to, and I had an idea that he would be a little cowardly when he heard the bullets whistling around him; but I was never more mistaken in my life, for he won his promotion in the very first battle in which our regiment was engaged. When I was made captain of our company, he received the appoint-

ment of first lieutenant, and an excellent officer he made. He was a splendid rider, and when mounted on his horse—'Thunderbolt' he called him—he made a fine appearance. He was no band-box officer, however, for he never shrank from his duty, and he was above ordering one of his men to do what he was afraid to undertake himself. He and I were prisoners once for about forty-eight hours, and the way it happened was this:

"Our regiment, after the battle of Pittsburg Landing, was detached from the Western army and ordered to the Potomac. We had scarcely been there a week before we were sent out on a scout, with orders to capture Mosby, who was constantly harassing us, and scatter his command. We were out about ten days, without accomplishing our object. Not a single glimpse did we get of a reb, and finally we turned our faces toward the camp. Our horses, as well as ourselves, were nearly jaded, and the way we do there, when a horse gives out, is to put a bullet through his head, shoulder our saddles, and trudge along after the column on foot, until we can find another animal to ride. I had command of the rear

guard; and when we had arrived within a day's march of camp, my horse suddenly gave out—laid right down in the middle of the road, and could n't go a step further. I was in something of a fix, and my feelings were none of the pleasantest when I found myself sprawling in the dusty road, and saw that my horse was used up. It was something of an undertaking to find my way back to camp, through a country infested with guerillas, and with which I was entirely unacquainted. It is true that I could have had a horse, as several were at once offered me by my men; but I could not be mean enough to save my own bacon by leaving one of those brave fellows behind; so I told Ben to go ahead with the company, keeping a good look-out for a horse, and if he could find one, to send it back to me. I then shot my animal; and it was a job I hated to do, I tell you, for he was as fine a horse as ever stepped; he had carried me many a long mile, and being my constant companion for almost a year and a half, I had become very much attached to him. But there was no help for it; our orders were strict; and I shouldered my saddle, and marched after the column, which was soon out of sight.

“I walked along at a pretty lively pace, keeping a good look-out on each side of the road for horses, and now and then looking behind, half expecting to see a squad of Mosby’s cavalry in pursuit, until I was startled by the report of a pistol directly in front of me, and, coming suddenly around a bend in the road, I found Ben sitting beside his horse, which had also given out, waiting for me to come up. As I approached, glad enough that I was not left to find my way back to camp alone, Ben picked up his saddle, and glancing sorrowfully at the work he had done, said :

“‘There’s an end of poor Thunderbolt—the best horse in the regiment. It has no doubt saved him many a long scout, but I never felt so sorry for any thing in my life.’

“It was hard work, walking along that dusty road, carrying our heavy saddles, and we anxiously scanned every field which we passed, in hopes that we should find some stray horse ; but without success. About three o’clock in the afternoon we reached a cross-road, and then we knew where we were. We had frequently been there on short scouts ; so, without stopping to keep any further

look-out for horses, we quickened our pace, and about two miles further on, arrived at the house of a lady with whom we were well acquainted, and who, as we had always considered her loyal, had been allowed to remain in undisturbed possession of her property, which our regiment had once defended against Mosby's men. Here we halted, and asked the lady if she could furnish us with some dinner. She replied in the affirmative, and we deposited our saddles in one corner of the room, while the woman began to bustle about. In half an hour as good a dinner as I ever tasted in that part of the country was served up, and Ben and I sat down to it with most ravenous appetites. Before sitting down, I should mention, we took off our belts, to which were fastened our sabers and revolvers, and laid them in the corner with our saddles; a very foolish trick, as it afterward proved; but, as we were within fifteen miles of camp, we did not apprehend any danger.

"After our hostess had seen us fairly started, she said:

" 'You will excuse me for a few moments, gentlemen, as I would like to run over to see my sister,

who is very sick. Will you keep an eye on the baby?' she continued, pointing to the small specimen of humanity in question, which lay fast asleep in the cradle.

"‘Yes,’ answered Ben, ‘I’ll see to him;’ and the woman started off, leaving us to finish our dinner and attend to the child.

"She had n’t been gone two minutes before the young one awoke, and, of course, began to yell. We didn’t know what to do, for it was new business to us. After trying in vain to make it hush, Ben took it out of the cradle, and began to trot it up and down on his knee. But it was no use, and he finally put it back, determined to let it cry until it got ready to stop, when I happened to think of the sugar-bowl. That was just the thing. Ben took good care to keep its mouth so full of sugar that it couldn’t yell, and we succeeded in keeping it pretty still.

"In about half an hour the woman returned, and, in reply to our inquiries, informed us that her sister was considerably better, and she hoped would be well in a few days. She then commenced talking on indifferent subjects; and we finally finished every thing on the table, and were think-

ing about starting for camp, when some one suddenly called out:

“‘Here! here! Get up, you Yanks. Get up from that table.’

“We looked up, and there, standing in the door-way, with their revolvers leveled at our heads, were two rebels—Colonel Mosby and a corporal.

“‘I’ve fixed you!’ exclaimed the woman, triumphantly. ‘You didn’t think that while you were stealing my chickens, and abusing me, that I would ever have the power on my side.’

“The old hag had betrayed us. She had invented the story of her sick sister, in order that her absence might not cause us any suspicions, and had left the child for us to take care of, so that we should be obliged to remain until she returned. The story of stealing her chickens, and abusing her, was a mere pretext; for our orders to respect her property were strict, and we had not dared to disobey them.

“‘There’s only one thing that I am sorry for, madam,’ said Ben, coolly, ‘and that is, that I didn’t choke that young one of yours.’

“‘Come, come, there!’ interrupted the colonel,

‘Get up from behind that table at once, or you are dead men!’

“‘We’re gobbled easy enough, Harry,’ said Ben, in his usual careless manner, as we arose from our chairs. ‘Well, I suppose there’s no help for it, seeing that we have no weapons. What do you intend to do with a fellow, Johnny?’”

“‘Take you direct to Richmond,’ was the encouraging answer, made by the corporal, as he walked across the room and took possession of our arms. ‘Come out here!’”

“We had no other alternative; so we marched out in front of the house, our captors mounted their horses, and we trudged along before them on foot toward Centerville.

“You have been a prisoner, and can easily imagine the thoughts that passed through our minds. We saw before us a long, fatiguing march, with hard fare, and harder treatment, and the dreaded Libby looming up in the background. But we were not allowed much time to commune with our own thoughts, for Mosby immediately began to question us in relation to the forces we had in different parts of the country. Of course we told him some of the most outrageous stories, but he

seemed to put some faith in them; and when we reached the cross-road he left us, after ordering the corporal to take us to Culpepper.

“As soon as the colonel had got out of sight, the corporal began to abuse us in the worst kind of a manner, swearing at us, and calling us Abolitionists and the like; and said that if he could have his own way he would hang us on the nearest tree. We told him that it was a mean trick to treat prisoners in that way, and advised him to keep a civil tongue in his head, as the tables might be turned on him some day; but he paid no attention to us, and kept on jawing, until finally, just before night, we reached Centerville.

“We stopped at a house near the middle of the town, where we were treated very kindly by the people, who gave us plenty to eat, but told us that we were fighting on the wrong side. After supper, the corporal took us out to the barn, where he proceeded to ‘go through’ us pretty thoroughly. He robbed me of twenty dollars in greenbacks, a watch, comb, several letters—in short, he did not leave me any thing. After overhauling Ben’s pockets, he ordered him to ‘come out of his coat,’ which he did without

a grumble; and after cutting off the shoulder-straps—because Ben ‘wouldn’t need ’em any more,’ he said—he put the coat on his own back, locked the barn, and left us to our meditations. As soon as the sound of his footsteps had died away, I said:

“‘Ben, I’m going to get out of here, if I can.’

“‘All right,’ said he; ‘feel around on the floor and see if you can’t find something to force that door open with. How I wish I had that young one here! I wouldn’t feed it with sugar, I tell you.’

“We commenced groping about in the darkness, but not a thing in the shape of a club could be found. Then we placed our shoulders against the door, and pressed with all our strength; but it was too strong to be forced from its hinges, and the floor was so securely fastened down, that it could not be pulled up; so, after working until we were completely exhausted, we sat down on the floor to rest.

“‘We’re in for it,’ said Ben.

“‘But I’m not going to Libby, now I tell you,’ I answered. ‘To-morrow we shall probably start

for Culpepper, under guard of that corporal; and the very first chance, I'm going to mizzle.'

"Ben made no reply, but I well knew what he was thinking about. After a few more ineffectual attempts, we then lay down on the hard boards, and tried to go to sleep; but that was, for a long time, out of the question.

"Our situation was not one calculated to quiet our feelings much, and as we rolled about the floor, trying to find a comfortable position, I could hear Ben venting his spite against 'that brat.' He did not seem to think of the woman who had betrayed us.

"We passed a most miserable night, and at daylight were awakened with:

"'Come out here, you Yanks. It's high time you were moving toward Libby.'

"That rascally corporal seemed to delight in tormenting us; but there was only one thing we could do, and that was to 'grin and bear it.' After a hasty breakfast, we again set out, the corporal following close behind us on his horse, with a revolver in his hand, ready to shoot the first one that made an attempt at escape. We kept on, stopping only once or twice for water,

until we reached the Bull Run bridge. Here the corporal stopped, and called out:

“‘Come here, one of you fellers, and hold my horse.’

“I did as he ordered, and the rebel dismounted, bent down on one knee, and commenced fixing his spur. My mind was made up in an instant. It was now or never. Giving a yell to attract Ben’s attention, I sprang at the rebel, caught him around the neck, and rolled him over on his back. He kicked and swore furiously, and if I had been alone, he would most likely have got the better of me; but Ben, being close at hand, caught up the revolver, which the rebel had laid on the ground beside him, and in a moment more I had secured his saber. He saw that further resistance was useless, and bawled out:

“‘Don’t shoot, Yank. Don’t shoot me, for mercy’s sake!’

“‘Nobody’s going to hurt you if you behave yourself,’ said Ben. ‘Get up.’

“The rebel raised himself to his feet, and I at once began to ‘sound’ him, as we call it. I got back my watch, money, and every thing else he had taken from us the night before. We then

ordered him to travel on ahead of us, and, as Ben's feet were so badly swollen that he could scarcely move, I told him to get on the horse, while I walked along by his side. We passed back through Centerville, keeping a good look-out for rebel scouts, which we knew were in the vicinity, but we did not meet with any of them until along toward night, when we heard a yell, and, looking up, saw half a dozen cavalry charging across the field toward us.

“‘I guess we're gobbled again, captain,’ said Ben.

“‘Not if our legs hold out,’ I answered. ‘Get down off that horse, quick. We must foot it, now.’

“Ben hastily dismounted, and, catching our prisoner by the arm, we pulled him over a fence, through the woods, and into a swamp, where we fastened him to a tree. We then tied a handkerchief over his mouth, to prevent him from making his whereabouts known to his friends, and made the best of our way to the camp, which we reached about daylight. We at once reported to the colonel, who sent us back with our company after the prisoner; but he was gone. His friends

had doubtless discovered him, and released him from his unpleasant situation. The woman who betrayed us paid the penalty of her treachery. Her house was burned over her head, and her husband, whom she had reported to us as dead, but who was found concealed in the barn, was taken back to the camp a prisoner."

CHAPTER III.

On Duty Again.



Y the time Harry had finished his story, it was almost sundown. Putting the cabin in order, and fastening the door, the boys then started for home. After a hearty supper at the cottage, different plans for their amusement were discussed and determined upon. If time would allow, we might relate many interesting incidents that transpired during the month they spent together; how, one day, the young moose ran away with Uncle Mike's wood-wagon and upset the boys in the road. We might, among others, tell of the hunting and fishing expeditions that came off, and the trials of speed that took place on the river, when the *Speedwell* showed that she had lost none of her sailing qualities during the year and a half that she had

remained idle in the shop; but one incident that happened will suffice.

It was on the morning of the last day that they were to pass together, as Frank's sick-leave had expired, and he must soon bid adieu to home and friends again, perhaps forever. This day had been set apart for a fishing excursion; and, bright and early, Frank was at Captain Butler's boat-house, where he found Harry waiting for him. When the bait and every thing else necessary for the trip had been stowed away in the skiff, the boys pulled into the river, and after spending an hour in rowing about the bass-ground, during which time they secured half a dozen fine fish, they started toward the perch-bed, and anchored outside the weeds.

Although they were remarkably successful, they did not seem to enjoy the sport. Frank's thoughts were constantly dwelling on the parting that must come on the morrow. It could not be avoided, for duty called him; and although the idea of disregarding the summons never once entered into his head, he could not help condemning the circumstances that rendered that call necessary. Harry, on the other hand, was impatient to re-

cover his health, as he wished to rejoin his command. While he was free, and enjoying the delights of home, his brother was languishing in a Southern dungeon—held as a hostage for a notorious guerrilla, who had been sentenced to death—not knowing at what moment he might be led forth to execution. Often, during the time that he and Frank had been together, living over the scenes of their school-days, had Harry's thoughts wandered to that brother, and it had done much to mar the pleasure he would otherwise have enjoyed. He imagined he could see him, seated in his loathsome cell, loaded with chains, pale and weak, (in consequence of the systematic plan of starvation adopted by the brutal authorities at Richmond to render our brave fellows unfit for further service, if they should chance to live until they were exchanged,) but firm in the belief that he had done his duty, and ready at any moment—for George was far from being a coward—to be sacrificed. Harry's thoughts, we repeat, often wandered to the dreaded Libby, and especially did they on this morning. And as he pictured to himself the treatment that his brother was daily receiving at the hands of the enemies of the government, is it

to be wondered if he indulged in feelings of the deepest malice toward the inhuman wretches who could be guilty of such barbarity?

"There's only this about it, Frank," he said, suddenly breaking the silence that had continued for half an hour; "there's only this about it: if one hair of George's head is injured, Company M' of our regiment never takes any more prisoners; and if I have no friendship for a traitor, neither have I for such men as these who are now approaching."

Frank looked up, and saw Charles Morgan and William Gage rowing toward them.

"Here is the very spot," continued Harry "where we met Morgan when you first became acquainted with him, on the morning when he told such outrageous stories about the fishing there was in New York harbor, and about his fighting Indians in the Adirondack Mountains, in the northern part of Michigan. William Gage, you know, used to be first lieutenant of the "Midnight Rangers."

"Yes, I remember them both," answered Frank. "But it seems to me that I heard some one say that Mr. Morgan is a rebel sympathizer; and

Charley, of course, not having brains enough to think for himself, is following in his father's lead."

"So I have heard; but he has never said a word against the government, and he'd better not, for I feel just like choking somebody this morning; and if I hate a rebel, I hold a domestic traitor in the most profound abhorrence."

"Hullo, boys!" exclaimed Charles, at this moment, coming alongside and stretching out a hand to each of them, "how are you? I'm glad to see you back again, Frank. But why haven't you been around to see a fellow? You've kept yourselves very close since your return."

"Yes, Harry and I have spent most of our time in the woods," answered Frank. "But we part again to-morrow."

"Going back to your ship, eh? Well, when do you suppose you will be home again for good?"

"I don't know. If I live, however, I'm going to see this war settled before I come back to civil life again."

"You've had some pretty hard times since you have been in the service, from what I hear."

"Rather tough," answered Harry.

"Well now, you see Bill and I were too sharp to go into any such business as that," said Charles, knowingly. "The old man said, from the start, that you never could whip the South."

"Well, your father was never more mistaken in his life," answered Frank. "We *are* going to bring back the seceded States, if it takes every man and every dollar at the North. But I don't see why you don't volunteer. How can you stay at home?"

"O, it is the easiest thing in the world," answered Charles, with a laugh. "In the first place, I think too much of my life; and then again, I don't care a snap which whips. I am not interested either way—I'm neutral."

"You're no such thing," answered Harry, angrily. "You never saw two dogs fight in the street, without wanting one or the other of them to whip, and your sympathies are either one way or the other. There's no such thing as a neutral in this war."

"Besides," said Frank, "if I were in your place, I should be ashamed to say that I was neutral. But I hope that you will be compelled to go into the army. Since you have neither the intelligence

to determine which side is in the right, nor the courage to fight for that side, I hope that you will be drafted, and that you can't find a substitute."

"Thank you," replied Charles, sneeringly. "You are very kind. But I, of course, know that this is a free country, and a man has a right to talk as he pleases."

"You have no right to utter treasonable sentiments," said Harry; "and another thing, I am not going to sit here and listen to them."

"You are not, indeed! I don't see how you can hinder it," replied Charles. "I say now, and it makes no difference who hears me, that I hope the South will whip, unless the North will allow her to go out of the Union peaceably. I have n't any thing against the South."

"Well, *I* have," answered Harry, scarcely able to control himself. "My brother is now starving in a rebel prison."

"I can't help it. I have not the least sympathy for him. The South said, at the commencement, that they only wanted to be let alone; and if George has n't any more sense than to meddle with them, I say, let him take the consequences;" and, as Charles ceased speaking, he dropped the

oars into the water, and was about to row off, when Frank seized the gunwale of his boat.

"Avast heaving, there, for a moment," he said, quietly. "Charley, take back what you have said."

"No, sir; I sha'n't do it. I mean what I have said, and I won't take back any thing. Let go of that boat, or I'll hit you," and he raised his oar as if about to strike Frank.

But Harry was too quick for him. Springing lightly into Charles's skiff, he easily wrested the oar from him, and then, seizing him by the collar, exclaimed:

"Take back every word you have said, or I'll wash some of the vile rebel sentiment out of you. I'll dump you overboard. Come, take it all back—quick."

"Help! help! Bill," whined Charles, writhing like an eel in Harry's strong grasp, "are you going to sit there and see me abused in this manner? Help, I tell you."

William looked first at Harry, then at Frank, who had grown exceedingly tall and muscular since the last time he had measured strength with him in friendly contest, and made no reply.

"Come, take it back," urged Harry.

"No, I won't," replied Charles, who, finding that he was left to fight his own battles alone, now began to struggle desperately. "I tell you I won't take back any thing."

"Then overboard you go," said Harry. "I'll see what effect cold water will have on you;" and, easily lifting Charles from his feet, in spite of his struggles, he threw him headlong into the water.

"How is it now?" he coolly inquired, as Charles appeared at the surface, looking very forlorn, indeed. "Any more rebel sentiment in you that wants washing out? Come in here, you young traitor;" and, as he spoke, he again seized him by the collar, and drew him into the boat.

"Unhand me," shouted Charles, as soon as he could regain his feet; "I'll fix you for this."

"Are you ready to take back what you said?" demanded Harry, tightening his grasp.

"No; nor shall I ever be," was the stubborn answer.

"Well, then, down you go again."

"No, no! do n't," screamed Charles, who now

began to be really frightened; "I take it all back."

"What do you take back?" asked Harry.

"I don't want to see the Northern prisoners all starved."

"Well, what else?"

"I don't want to see the Union destroyed."

"Go on; what next?"

"But I *do* wish the South could be whipped to-morrow, and be made to stay in the Union."

"Well, now you are talking sense," said Harry, releasing his hold of Charles's collar. "Of course, I know you do n't mean what you say, but I was bound to make you say a good word for the Union before I let you off. I have one more favor to ask of you, and then I am done. Will you oblige me by giving three cheers for the boys who are fighting our battles—every day risking their lives in defense of the old flag?"

Charles hesitated.

"I sha' n't ask you but once more, then," and here Harry pointed to the water, in a very significant manner.

Charles, knowing that he was in earnest, and that there was no escape, gave the required

cheers with as good a grace as he could command.

"That's right," said Harry, approvingly. "Now I have done with you, and you can thank your lucky stars that you have got off so easily. If you had been in the army when you said what you did a few moments since, the boys would have hung you to the very first tree they could have found. Now, take my advice, and don't let me hear of your uttering any more such sentiments as long as I remain in the village; if you do, I'll duck you as often as I can get my hands on you."

Harry then sprang into his own skiff, and Charles sullenly picked up his oars, and pulled toward home.

"There," exclaimed Harry, "I feel better now. I worked off a little of my indignation on that fellow. The rascal! to tell us that George ought to be starved for helping to maintain the government, and that he didn't care whether the Union went to ruin or not. Now that I think of it, I'm sorry that I let him off so easily."

"He was pretty well punished, after all," said

Frank. "It will have the effect of making him a little more careful."

At noon, the fish stopped biting, and the boys started for home. They parted at the boat-house, after Frank had promised to call and say "good-by" before he left in the morning.

When the latter reached home he found his trunk packed, and every thing in readiness for the start, so that he had nothing to do but roam about the premises, and take a last look at every thing, as he had done on a former occasion. His mother and sister tried to look cheerful, but it was a sorry failure, for Frank could easily read what was passing in their minds.

Morning came at length, and at eight o'clock, to Frank's great relief—for he wished the parting over as soon as possible—he saw the carriage approaching which was to take him to the steamer. A few embraces and hastily-spoken farewells, and Frank was whirling away from his home. At Captain Butler's he stopped for Harry, who met him at the gate with an open letter in his hand; and, as he sprang into the carriage, he exclaimed, joyfully:

"It's all right, Frank. Here's a letter from

George. He has been exchanged, and is now in the hospital at Washington. The rebels, he says, tried to starve him to death, but couldn't make it. He is only waiting until he gets strong enough to travel, and then he's coming home. He's pretty well used up. When I get back to the army, with Company 'M' to back me up, I'll make somebody smart for it."

By the time Harry had finished venting his anger against the enemies of the government, the carriage reached the wharf, as the steamer was moving out into the river. Frank had just time to get on board, and a few moments afterward the Julia Burton carried him out of sight of the village. He stopped only a short time at Portland; and, four days after leaving that place, found Archie waiting for him as he sprang off the train at Cairo. He reported to the fleet captain, who ordered him to "take passage down the river on the United States dispatch steamer General Lyon," which was to sail at four o'clock that afternoon. The cousins passed the day together. When four o'clock came, Archie returned to his high stool with a sorrowful countenance, and Frank waived his adieu from the

steamer that was to carry him back—to what? It is well that the future is hidden from us, for Frank would not have trod that deck with so light a heart had he known what was in store for him.

In a few days he arrived at his vessel, which he found anchored at White River. Time makes changes in every thing, and Frank saw many new faces among the ship's company. The old mate was still on board, and greeted him in his hearty sailor style as he came over the side. After he had reported to the captain, and had seen his luggage taken to his room, he was joined by one of his old messmates, whose name was Keys; and who, in answer to Frank's inquiry, "How is every thing?" proceeded to give him a statement of the condition of affairs.

"The ship still floats on an even keel," said he, pulling off his boots, and taking possession of Frank's bed. "The old man is as eccentric and good-natured as ever, sometimes flying off into one of his double-reefed topsail hurricanes, which don't mean any thing. All goes right about decks, but you will find some things changed in the steerage. There are only five officers left in

our mess that were here when you went away, and we have three new Johnny master's mates. They all came down in the same box; and the express man must have left them out in the damp over night, for they are the softest fellows I ever saw. They must have been brought up in some country where such a thing as a steamboat is unknown, for they don't know the starboard from the port side of the ship, call on deck 'up stairs, and the captain's cabin goes by the name of the 'parlor.' It wouldn't be so bad if they would only try to learn something, but they are very indignant if any one undertakes to volunteer advice; and, besides, they stand on their rank."

At this moment supper was announced, and Frank and his friend repaired to the steerage, where they found the mates of whom the latter had spoken. While they were eating, the whistle of a steamer was heard, and one of the new mates (whose name was French, but who was known as "Extra," from the fact that he was perfectly useless as an officer,) ordered the waiter to "go up stairs and see what boat it was." The boy did not move, for it was a regulation of the mess that when there was only one waiter in the

room to attend to the table, he was not to be sent away. Besides, the mate had no right to give such an order without first obtaining the permission of the caterer.

"Do you hear what I tell you?" he inquired, in a rage.

"Mr. French," said the caterer, quietly, "you can find out the name of that boat after supper, by asking the officer of the deck, or the quartermaster on watch."

"But I choose to send this boy to find out for me," replied Mr. French. "Come, go on, there, and do as I tell you, or I will see if you can not be made to obey the orders of your superiors."

"Stay where you are," said the caterer, addressing the waiter, "and do n't start until I tell you to." Then, turning to the mate, he continued, "You have no right to order him to do any thing in this mess-room without first consulting me."

"I haven't, eh? I wonder if this darkey ranks me? My appointment reads that I 'am to be obeyed by all persons under me in this squadron.'"

"That boy is not subject to your orders, as long as I am in the mess-room."

"Well, I shall take pains to inform myself on that point. I'll ask the captain."

"Do so," said the caterer, quietly; "and if you don't get the worst raking-down that you have had since you have been on board this vessel, then I am greatly mistaken."

The mate made no reply, but, after he had finished his supper, went on deck.

"Now, Frank," whispered Keys, "just come with me, and I will show you some fun."

Frank, always ready for any mischief, followed his companion on deck, where they found Mr. French in animated conversation with his two friends.

"See here, French," said Keys, approaching the latter in a confidential manner, "are you going to put up with such abuse as you received from that caterer?"

"I'd see, if I were in your place, whether or not I had authority to command my inferiors," chimed in Frank.

"Certainly, so would I," said Keys. "Go and report the matter to the old man."

"That caterer ought to be brought down a peg or two," said Frank.

"Well," said the mate, "I know that I have got the right on my side; but I'm afraid, if I report the matter, the captain will give me a blowing up."

"O, that's only one of that caterer's stories," said Keys, contemptuously. "You see he's afraid you will report him, and he told you what he did to frighten you. Every body on board the ship is trying to run down us mates; they don't seem to care a fig for our orders; even the men laugh at us, and the sooner they find out that we have some authority here, the better it will be for us. I wish I had as good a chance as you have; I'd report the whole matter."

"I believe I will report it," said the mate, encouraged by the sincere manner in which Mr. Keys and Frank spoke. "I can't have a man trample on my authority, when it comes from the admiral. Is the captain in the parlor?"

"Yes," answered Frank, making use of his handkerchief to conceal his laughter; "I saw him go in there just a moment since."

The mate accordingly walked aft, and without

waiting to speak to the orderly, who stood at the gangway, he opened the door without knocking, and entered the cabin.

As soon as he had disappeared, Frank and his companion ran on to the quarter-deck, and took a position at a grating directly over the captain's cabin, where they could hear all that went on below.

"My eyes!" whispered Keys; "I wouldn't be in Extra's boots for the whole squadron. Won't he get his rations stuffed into him?"

The captain, who was at supper, looked up in surprise, as Mr. French entered unannounced; and, after regarding him sharply for a moment, said:

"Well, sir!"

"I came here, sir," began the mate, "to tell you"——

"Take off your cap, sir!" vociferated the captain.

The mate, not in the least embarrassed, did as he was ordered, and again commenced:

"I came here, sir"——

"Do you know what that marine is standing out there for?" again interrupted the captain. "If

you don't, your first hard work will be to go to the executive officer and find out. Now, don't you again ever come into my cabin in this abrupt manner. Always send in your name by the orderly. It seems impossible to teach you any thing. But what were you going to say?"

"I came here, sir," began the mate again, "to see if I have any authority to command my inferiors in rank. My appointment says"—

"O, hang your appointment!" shouted the captain. "Come to the point at once."

"Well, sir, while at supper, I ordered our steward to go up stairs and execute a commission for me, and he would n't go."

"Are you caterer of your mess?"

"No, sir."

"Then sir, allow me to inform you that you have no more authority over those waiters in that mess-room than you have to break open my trunk and take out my money. If you should need the services of one of the boys, go to the caterer and get his consent. But I wish you would try and learn something. You have been on board this ship now three weeks, and are of no more use than an extra boiler. Go to somebody

else in future with your foolish complaints. You may go, sir."

The mate left the cabin, feeling very cheap, and wondering what was the use of having any rank, if he could n't use it, and more than half inclined to believe that the captain had no right to address him in so rude a manner.

"Well, what did the old man say?" inquired Keys, who, with Frank, had hurried forward to meet him at the gangway.


"He says he will fix it all right," replied Mr. French, averting his face, for he knew that he was uttering a falsehood. "I knew I would get satisfaction."

So saying, he walked off, shaking his head in a very knowing manner, while the two friends retreated to the steerage, where they gave full vent to their feelings. The circumstance was related to the caterer, who came in a few moments afterward, and after enjoying a hearty laugh at the mate's expense, Frank retired to his room and turned in.

About two o'clock in the morning a steamer came down and reported that a regiment of rebels had posted themselves behind the levee at Cy-

press Bend, and were holding the position in spite of the efforts of three gun-boats to dislodge them, rendering navigation impossible. The matter was reported to the captain, who, after making himself acquainted with the facts, ordered the Ticonderoga to be got under way and headed up the river.

CHAPTER IV.

The Fight in the Woods.

N the next day they arrived at Cypress Bend, where they found three "tin-clads" anchored, paying no attention to the perfect storm of bullets which the concealed rebels rained upon their decks from behind the levee. As soon as the Ticonderoga came within range, the guerrillas directed a volley against her; but, although her decks were crowded with men, the fire was without effect. The boatswain's whistle, and the order, "All hands under cover," rang sharply through the ship, and the decks were instantly deserted. The second division—the one which Frank commanded—was at once called to quarters, and as soon as the gun could be cast loose and pointed, an eleven-inch shell went shrieking into the woods. It burst far beyond

the levee. The rebels sent back a taunting laugh, and their bullets fell faster than ever.

The levee which lines both banks of the Mississippi forms a most excellent breastwork; and behind this, a party of determined men can easily hold twice their number at bay, unless a position can be obtained where they can be brought under a cross-fire. The formation of the river rendered it impossible for such a position to be taken, and it was evident that to anchor before the levee and attempt to dislodge them with big guns, was worse than useless; neither could they be beaten back with their own weapons, for the rebels were very expert in "bushwhacking," exposing but a very small portion of their persons, and the best marksman would stand but a poor chance of hitting one of them. Some more decisive steps must be taken.

So thought the captain of the Ticonderoga, as he paced up and down the turret, while Frank, divested of his coat, was issuing his commands with his usual coolness, now and then catching hold of a rope and giving a pull at the gun, all the while sending the shells into the levee, making the dirt fly in every direction.

"Cease firing, Mr. Nelson," said the captain, at

length. "It is useless to think of driving them off in this manner."

"Cease firing, sir," repeated Frank, showing that he understood the order. "Run the gun in, lads, and close those ports."

The captain then ordered his vessel to be run alongside of the Rover, (one of the tin-clads,) and, after a few moments' consultation with her commander, some plan seemed to have been determined upon, for Frank was again ordered to open a hot fire on the levee. Under cover of this, signal was made for the other two vessels to get under way, and proceed down the river.

"Mr. Nelson," said the captain, as soon as he had seen the signal obeyed, "give the command of your division to the executive officer, and come down into the cabin for orders."

As soon as the executive could be found, Frank gave up the command to him, and as he entered the cabin, the captain said to him:

"I have ordered the tin-clads to go down the river and land as many men as they can spare, to get around in the rear of those rebels, and get them out from behind that levee. They must be got out of that, if possible, for navigation is vir-

tually closed as long as they remain there. I shall also send our two howitzers and forty men, of which you will take command. I need not tell you to do your best."

The captain then went on deck, selected the men, and Frank succeeded in getting them and the howitzers safely on board the Rover, which still lay alongside. The smoke from the gun of the Ticonderoga completely concealed their movements, and the rebels were entirely ignorant of what was going on. As soon as the men were all on board, the Rover steamed down the river and joined the other vessels, which were waiting for her to come up.

About five miles below was a point which completely concealed them from the view of the rebels, and behind this point the vessels landed; the crews disembarked, and commenced marching through the woods toward the place where the rebels were posted. They numbered two hundred and fifty men, and were commanded by the captain of the Rover, who, although a very brave man and an excellent sailor, knew nothing of infantry tactics. The second in command was Mr. Howe, an ensign belonging to the same vessel. He had never been

in a fight; and when he first entered the navy he knew no more about a vessel than he did about the moon. His appointment had been obtained through some influential friends at home. He had served in a company of state militia, however, before the breaking out of the war, and considered himself quite a military genius.

The sailors marched in line of battle—with skirmishers in front and on each flank, and Frank, with his battery, was in the center. In this manner they marched for about an hour, and then a halt was ordered, and the captain, with several of his officers, went forward to reconnoiter, while Mr. Howe, who was left in command, ordered the men to “stack arms.” Frank was astounded when he heard this command, and, approaching the officer, saluted him, and said:

“I object to this, Mr. Howe. I think it would be much better, sir, to keep the men under arms; for it is by no means certain that all the rebels we shall be obliged to fight, are in front of us.”

“I believe you were put in command of that battery, sir,” replied Mr. Howe, haughtily, “while I was left in charge of these men. I would thank

you, then, to attend to your own business, and to let me alone."

"Very good, sir," answered Frank. "I did not intend to give any offense, sir, but merely to offer a suggestion. But if I command that battery, I intend to have it in readiness for any emergency. Cut loose those guns, lads, and stand to your quarters!"

The reports of muskets in their front proved that the rebels were yet keeping a hot fire directed against the Ticonderoga. But still Frank was not deceived; he knew that all the fighting would not be done at the front. Scarcely had these thoughts passed through his mind, when there was a rapid discharge of fire-arms in their rear, and two of the men fell. As Frank had expected, the rebels had been informed of what was going on, and had sent part of their force to cut the sailors off from the river. For a moment the greatest confusion prevailed. The men, who had been lying about in the shade of the trees, made a general rush for their weapons, and after delivering a straggling and ineffectual fire, hastily retreated, with the exception of Frank's men, and a few of the more courageous of the infantry

The latter concealed themselves behind trees and logs, and deliberately returned the fire of the rebels, while the former, who were old seamen, and had long been accustomed to the discipline of the service, stood at their guns awaiting orders. Mr. Howe, for a moment, stood pale and trembling, and then, without waiting to give any orders, disappeared in the bushes. Frank, who was left alone with but sixty men, was astounded when he witnessed this cowardly conduct of his superior, and he had hardly time to recover from his surprise, when the rebels, after firing another volley, broke from their concealments, with loud yells, and charged toward the guns. This brought Frank to his senses. With the handful of men he had left, he could at least cover the retreat of his timid support.

“Steady there, lads!” he shouted. “Aim low—fire!”

The howitzers belched forth their contents, and, as Frank had taken the precaution to have them loaded with canister, the slaughter was awful. The muskets had also done considerable execution, and the rebels recoiled when they witnessed the havoc made in their ranks. Frank, who was al

ways ready to take advantage of such an opportunity, immediately ordered a counter-charge. The sailors sprang at the word, with a yell, and, led by Frank, who fixed his bayonet as he ran, threw themselves upon the rebels, who at once fled precipitately, leaving their dead and wounded on the field.

“Back to your guns, lads,” shouted Frank, “and give ’em a shot before they get out of range.”

The men worked with a yell, sending the shells rapidly in the direction in which the rebels had retreated, until a loud roar of musketry at the front told them that they had other enemies with which to deal.

While this fight at the rear had been going on, the sailors who had retreated had been met by the captain and his officers, who were returning from their reconnoissance, and, as soon as order could be restored, an attack had been made on the rebels who were still posted behind the levee. In a few moments Mr. Howe came running up, and addressing himself to Frank, exclaimed:

“What are you doing here, sir—shooting into the woods where there are no rebels? Why are

you not at the front, where you belong? If you are afraid to go there, you had better give up the command of that battery."

Frank thought this was a nice way for Mr. Howe to talk, after the manner in which he had behaved a few moments before, but, without stopping to reply, he ordered the guns to be secured, and the men, catching up the trail-ropes, commenced dragging the battery toward the place where the fight was raging, while Mr. Howe again suddenly disappeared.

When Frank arrived at the front, he found the rebels were still behind the levee, where they were exposed to a galling fire from the sailors who were concealed among the trees, evidently preferring to run the risk of being driven out by the musketry than to brave the shells from the Ticonderoga, which now began to fall into the woods just behind them, and bursting, threw dirt and branches in every direction. Without waiting for orders, Frank immediately took up a sheltered position, and straightway opened upon the rebels a hot fire of canister. By the exertions of the officers, the stragglers were all collected, and, while the line was being formed for a

charge, Frank was ordered to move his battery out of the woods, into the open field. The young officer's blood ran cold when he heard this command, for the rebels, who greatly outnumbered the sailors, and who were deterred from making a charge and overpowering them only through fear of the shells from the Ticonderoga, were sending a perfect shower of bullets into the bushes where the howitzers were stationed. Even in his present protected position, Frank had lost five of his men, and when he thought what a slaughter there would be when he should move out of his concealment, it made him shudder. But he had always been taught that the success of the navy was owing to "strict discipline;" and once, when he had been reported to the captain for disobeying an order which he had considered as unjust, that gentleman had told him—"Always obey whatever orders you may receive from your superiors, and, if you are aggrieved, you can seek redress afterward." In the present instance, this seemed very poor policy; for what good would it do to make objections to the order after his men had been sacrificed? He had no alternative, however, but to obey. The men, too, were well aware of

the danger they were about to incur, but hesitated not a moment when Frank repeated the order to advance. They at once pushed the guns out into the open ground, and the effect was as they had expected. The whole fire of the rebels was directed against them, and every volley left Frank with less men to handle his battery. In fact, it soon became impossible to load the guns; for, as fast as the men picked up a rammer or sponge, they were shot down. It was evident that they could not remain there.

"Jack," said Frank at length, turning to the old boatswain's mate, "go and ask the captain if I can't be allowed to move back to my old position. I can do more execution there. Besides, we'll all be dead men in less than five minutes, if we remain here."

The man bounded off to execute the order, and just then the captain of one of the guns was killed. Frank immediately seized the priming-wire which had fallen from his hand, and worked with the rest. His fear had given place to a reckless determination to do his duty, for, let the consequences be what they might, no blame could be attached to him. Impatiently, however, he

waited for the return of the mate, and his impatience increased when word was brought him that the ammunition was failing. At length, after a delay which seemed extraordinary, a charge was ordered.

The rebels seemed to have an idea of what was going on, for, a few moments before the order was given, their fire slackened considerably; but, as soon as the sailors, in obedience to the command, issued from the woods, they were met with a terrific fire, which threw them into confusion. In vain their officers urged and commanded; the men refused to advance, but remained standing in full view of the rebels, while every moment their comrades were falling around them. At length the enemy made a counter-charge, and the sailors, without waiting to resist, broke and fled in every direction. Frank and his men remained at their posts until the last moment; but they soon found themselves completely deserted, and were obliged to fall back into the woods.

By the exertions of the officers, a few of the men were rallied in the edge of the timber, and, bravely standing their ground, the rebels were met with a murderous fire, and the shells from the

Ticonderoga, which now began to burst in their very midst, completed their confusion, and they, in turn, were compelled to retreat.

In an instant, Frank and several of his men sprang out and attempted to recover the howitzers, which had been left between the lines, but the rebels were on the watch, and, after the loss of three of his men, he was obliged to order a retreat. For two hours a severe a fight was maintained, the rebels making several charges, which were easily repulsed by the sailors; and each time Frank made unsuccessful attempts to recover his battery, but was as often compelled to retreat, leaving some of his men dead on the field, or prisoners in the hands of the enemy.

The left of the line rested on the bank of the river, where a full view of the Ticonderoga could be obtained. After the fight had raged nearly three hours, without any advantage being gained on either side, one of the men reported that the ship was making signals. The commander of the expedition hurried along the line, calling out—

“Mr. Howe! Where’s the signal officer, Mr. Howe?” But he received no answer. No one

had seen Mr. Howe since he had so ingloriously retreated at the commencement of the fight.

"Pass the word along the line for Mr. Howe!" shouted the captain.

The order was obeyed, and finally a faint voice, some distance in the rear, replied, "Here, sir."

"What are you doing there, sir?" demanded the captain, in a voice of thunder. "Why are you not at your post? Get out there with your flag, and answer the Ticonderoga's signals." And the captain began to consult his signal-book.

Mr. Howe looked first at the rebels, then at the captain, then down at the flag which he held in his hand, but he did not move. It was a dangerous undertaking; for, in answering the signals, he would be obliged to stand on the bank of the river, where there was nothing but bushes to protect him, and where the rebels would be certain to see him; but the rattling of the musketry, the sharp whistle of the bullets as they flew thickly about among the trees, and the roar of the Ticonderoga's guns—sounds which he had never before heard—so worked upon the imagination of the terrified man, that the danger seemed tenfold worse than it really was.

In a few moments the captain had made out the signal, which was, "How do you succeed?" and exclaimed:

"Mr. Howe, make the answer that we don't succeed at all—no advantage on either side; that our ammunition is getting scarce; and that——. Why don't you start, sir?" he shouted, seeing that Mr. Howe did not move.

"Captain," faltered the man, in a scarcely audible voice, "I should be very happy, sir; very glad, indeed, sir; but—, but——"

"No remarks, sir, but do as you are ordered, instantly."

"Really, captain, I—, I——"

The man could go no further, but stood trembling like a leaf, with the utmost terror depicted in every feature.

"You're a coward, sir!" shouted the captain, in a terrible rage—"a mean, contemptible coward."

"I know it, sir," replied the man, so terrified that he scarcely knew what he was saying; but the fact is"——

"Go to rear!" shouted the captain, "and stay there. Here, sir," he continued, turning to Frank,



who happened to be the nearest officer, "can you make those signals?"

"Yes, sir," answered Frank, promptly. His face was very pale, for, accustomed as he was to the noise and confusion of battle, he well knew there was danger in the step he was about to take. But his features expressed determination instead of betraying terror. His duty must be done, whatever the consequences might be; and hastily picking up the flag which Mr. Howe, in his fright, had dropped, he sprang out in view of the Ticonderoga, made the required signals, and retreated in safety. The rebels had seen the flag waving above the bushes, and had directed a hot fire against it, but, although his frail protection was riddled with bullets, Frank escaped unhurt.

In a quarter of an hour, during which time the fire was warmly sustained by both parties, the Ticonderoga again made signals, ordering the captain of the expedition to make the best of his way back to his vessels. Frank answered the signal, and again retreated in safety.

The word had already been passed along the line to fall back slowly, when Frank, approaching the captain, said :

"I do not wish to go back to the ship without my battery, sir. Will you give me men enough to recover it?"

"No, sir; I can't send any one out there to be shot at. It is certain death, sir."

Frank, who thought that the captain had suddenly grown very careful of his men, made no reply, but hastened back to the spot where he had left his battery. To his joy and surprise he found one of the howitzers safe in the hands of his men; and, as he came up, a shell went crashing toward the rebel line, followed by a triumphant shout from the sailors. The boatswain's mate, who had managed to secure the gun, by throwing a rope around the trail-wheel, was endeavoring, in the same manner, to obtain possession of the other. After a few ineffectual attempts, he succeeded, and the gun was pulled back safely into the bushes. When they had secured the remainder of the ammunition, the men caught up the trail-ropes, and, without delay, Frank took his old position in the center of the retreating line. The rebels followed them so closely that the sailors were frequently compelled to halt and drive them back. During one of these halts, the captain of the ex

pedition was killed. As if by magic, Mr. Howe appeared on the scene, and, without waiting to recover the body of his officer, gave the command to fall back more rapidly. At length, just before they reached the bank where they had disembarked, the ammunition for the howitzers being exhausted, Frank requested permission to retreat still more rapidly, and get his guns on board the nearest vessel.

"That request is in perfect keeping with your conduct during the fight," returned Mr. Howe, sneeringly. "The plea of saving your battery is a very handy one; but if you are afraid to remain here with us, you may run as fast as you wish. I'd be ashamed to hold up my head after this, if I were in your place."

"I am not afraid to remain here, sir," answered Frank, with a good deal of spirit; "and if you say that I have acted the part of a coward during this fight, I defy you to prove the charge. The idea that I am afraid, because I wish to retreat in order to save my battery, is absurd. Run those guns along lively, lads."

Frank succeeded in getting his howitzers on board one of the tin-clads, which still lay along-

side of the bank, without the loss of another man. A moment afterward the sailors came pouring down the bank. As soon as they were all on board, the vessels moved out into the stream, and commenced shelling the woods. While thus engaged, the Ticonderoga came down the river, and, after dropping her anchor, signaled for the officer in command of the expedition to repair on board. Mr. Howe at once put off in a boat to obey the order, while the vessel in which Frank had taken refuge ran alongside of the Ticonderoga, and as soon as the battery had been taken off, the men, covered with dust and blood, and their faces begrimed with powder, stood silently around the guns, while the remainder of the crew gathered on the opposite side of the deck, and regarded their comrades with sorrow depicted in every feature of their sun-burnt faces. Frank knew that the fight had been a most desperate one, and that he had lost many of his men; but he could scarcely believe his eyes, when he found that out of the forty brave fellows who had started out with him in the morning, but *fifteen remained*—more than half had been left dead on the field, or prisoners in the hands of the rebels.

In a scarcely audible voice he called the roll, and his emotion increased when, at almost every third name, some one answered:

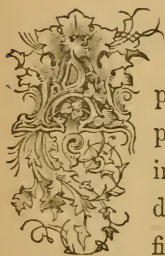
“Not here, sir.”

In a few moments the captain appeared on deck. The report of the commander of the expedition had, of course, been unfavorable, and the captain's face wore a look of trouble. Hastily running his eye over the line of dusty, bleeding men that stood before him, he said, in a low voice, as if talking to himself:

“Only fifteen left. I could ill afford to lose so many men. You may go below, lads. Doctor, see that the very best care is taken of the wounded.”

After delivering this order, the captain, who was evidently ill at ease, turned and walked down into his cabin.

CHAPTER V.

In the Hands of the "Johnnies" Again.

AS soon as the men had disappeared, Frank, with a heavy heart, repaired to his room to dress for supper. He thought over all the little incidents of the day, and frequently detected himself in saying: "Only fifteen men left; fifteen out of forty!"

What a slaughter—a useless slaughter—there had been! And all had been occasioned by the ignorance of the commanding officer of the expedition. Had Frank been allowed to retain the sheltered position which he had at first taken up, the result would have been far different. And how had he escaped without even a scratch? He had stood beside his men during the whole of the fight—freely exposing himself, and, rendered conspicuous by his uniform, had signaled the vessel

twice; and each time the flag had been riddled by bullets, but not a shot had touched him! It seemed but little short of a miracle that he had come off unscathed, when so many men had fallen around him.

He was interrupted in his meditations by the entrance of the orderly, who informed him that his presence was wanted in the cabin. Frank hastily pulled on his coat and repaired thither. As he entered, the captain said :

"Take a chair, Mr. Nelson. I wish to have a few moments' serious conversation with you."

Frank, surprised at the captain's tone and manner, seated himself, and the latter continued :

"Are you aware, sir, that you have this day destroyed all the confidence I have hitherto placed in you, and have rendered yourself liable to severe punishment?"

The effect of this question, so abruptly put, was astounding, and Frank could only falter—

"Sir? I—I—don't understand you, sir."

"Mr. Nelson, I am surprised at you, sir," said the captain, sternly. "I shall have to refresh your memory, then. You have this day been guilty of misdemeanors, any one of which renders you

liable to a court-martial, and to a disgraceful dismissal from the service. In the first place, you have shown gross disrespect to your superior officer, and"—

"I guilty of disrespect, sir!" repeated Frank, scarcely believing his ears. "There must be some mistake, sir, for"—

"Don't interrupt me, sir. I repeat, you have been guilty of disrespect to your superior officer, and of cowardice, having been found with your battery far in the rear at a time when your services were very much needed at the front; and then, after the fight had fairly commenced, as if waking up to a sense of your duty, and, no doubt, wishing to make amends for what you had done, you, contrary to orders, recklessly exposed your men, and, as a consequence, out of forty of the bravest fellows that ever trod a ship's deck—which were placed under your command this morning—you had but fifteen left when you returned on board. The energy displayed by you in working your battery, and the manner in which you obtained possession of it, after you moved out from your sheltered position, and had been compelled to retreat, were feats of which any officer

might be justly proud, and which I should have been most happy to reward with your promotion, had you not spoiled every thing by your infamous conduct at the commencement of the fight. Hitherto, since you have been on board this ship, you have been a good officer, have always attended to your duties, and it pains me to be obliged to talk to you in this manner. I never thought that you, after what you did at Cypress Bend, while you were on board of the Milwaukee, would ever have been guilty of such misdemeanors. However, as your conduct heretofore has always been such as I could approve, I shall see that no charges are made against you; and I sincerely hope that what you have learned to-day will be a lesson that you will never forget. I shall give you sufficient opportunities to make amends for what you have done, and I shall commence by sending you ashore with a flag of truce, to ask permission of the rebels to bury our dead. You may start at once, sir."

This was a hint that his presence in the cabin was no longer desirable, and Frank, who, in his confusion and bewilderment scarcely knew what he was doing, made his best bow and retired.

What his feelings were as he listened to this

reprimand, administered by the captain, who never before had spoken a harsh word to him, it is impossible to describe. He again thought over every thing he had done during the fight; how he had, at the commencement of the action, beaten back the rebels, with a mere handful of men; how he had, in obedience to orders, taken the exposed position where he had lost so many of his gun's crew, and which he had held in spite of the storm of bullets that rained around him, until the whole line had been compelled to retreat, and he was left unsupported; how he had twice risked his life in signaling the ship; and how, when the retreat was ordered he had brought back his guns in safety: he thought of all these things, and wondered where the charge of cowardice could be brought in. And then, when and how had he been guilty of disrespect to his superior officer? Certainly not in remonstrating against ordering the men to stack their arms, for that was a privilege to which he, as one of the commanding officers of the expedition, was entitled. In regard to recklessly exposing his men, the case was not quite so clear. It was true that, in the beginning of the fight, he had ordered a charge upon the rebels, who

greatly outnumbered his own men, and had easily driven them, without loss to himself: perhaps it was there that the third charge had been brought in. But although he was conscious that he had endeavored to do his whole duty, the words of the captain had cut him to the quick. It had been an unlucky day for him. The expedition had proved a failure, and he had been accused of misdemeanors of which he had never dreamed. It seemed as if fate was against him.

"I believe, as Archie used to say," he soliloquized, "that I am the unluckiest dog in existence. Troubles never come singly."

"The captain wishes to see you, sir," said one of the men, stepping up and interrupting his meditations.

"All right," answered Frank, who was so completely absorbed in his reverie that he was entirely unconscious of what was going on around him; "call all hands to quarters immediately."

"Sir—I—I do n't mean—sir—the captain wishes to speak with you, sir," repeated the sailor, half inclined to believe that Frank was getting crazy. This aroused the young officer to a sense of his situation; as he approached the

quarter-deck, where the captain was standing, the latter said :

“Mr. Nelson, do you intend to go ashore with that flag of truce, sir?”

“I beg your pardon, sir,” faltered Frank, “I forgot all about that. Will you have the kindness to call away the first cutter?” he continued, approaching the quarter-master, and saluting him as the officer of the deck.

“Mr. Nelson,” shouted the captain, “what are you doing? Are you crazy, sir?”

“I believe I am, captain, or pretty near it,” answered Frank. “The charges that have been brought against me have well-nigh upset me. They are false, sir, and I do n’t deserve the reprimand I have received.”

In his next attempt to find the officer of the deck Frank met with more success. While the cutter was being manned, he ran down into the steerage, and seizing a pen, hastily dashed off the following.

UNITED STATES STEAMER TICONDEROGA, }
OFF CYPRESS BEND, *Oct. 30, 1863.* }

SIR:

Having been reported, by the officer in command of an expedition—sent ashore this day for the purpose of dislodg-

ing a body of rebels posted behind the levee—for cowardice, disrespect to my superior officer, and for recklessly exposing my men to the fire of the rebels, and knowing, sir, that these charges are utterly groundless, I respectfully request that a Court of Inquiry may be convened to examine into my behavior while under the enemy's fire.

I am, sir, very respectfully

Your obedient servant,

FRANK NELSON,
Acting Master's Mate.

Acting Rear-Admiral D. D. PORTER, U. S. N.,
Commanding Miss. Squadron.

While he was sealing the envelope the messenger boy entered and reported the cutter ready. Frank ran on deck, and, after giving the communication to the captain, with a request that it might be approved and forwarded to the Admiral, he sprang into the boat, and gave the order to shove off.

The old boatswain's mate, who was acting as the coxswain of the cutter, had rigged up a flag of truce. As they pulled toward the shore, Frank waved this above his head until he elicited a similar response from the bank; then, throwing down the flag, he seated himself in the stern sheets, and covered his face with his hands. The old mate, mistaking his emotion for sorrow at the death of so many of his men, said :

"Yes, it is a hard case. Not a few of us are left without our chums; but we all know it was n't your fault. There would have been more of us left if you had been allowed to have your own way."

"Then I did not expose you needlessly, did I, Jack?"

"Why, bless you, no, sir. Who says you did, sir?" inquired one of the crew.

"But tell me one thing, Jack," said Frank, his face still covered with his hands, "Am I a coward?"

"No, sir," answered the mate, indignantly; "'cause if you was, you wouldn't have held on to them guns as long as you did, and you would not have pitched into that rebel atween the lines, as you did about a year ago, at this very place. In course you ain't no coward."

This was some consolation. The men whom he commanded, and who had always cheerfully followed where he had dared to lead, thought very differently from the man who had retreated almost before the fight had commenced, and who, to screen himself, had brought those charges against one whose conduct had always been above reproach.

"Yes, as you say, it is a hard case, Jack," said Frank, uncovering his face, and glancing toward the rebels who thronged the levee. "It is a hard case, indeed, but I will come out at the top of the heap yet."

"What's the matter, sir?" inquired the mate. "Any one been wrongin' you, sir? He'd better not show his ugly figure-head when what's left of the first division has shore liberty. We'll douse his top-lights for him."

By this time the cutter had reached the shore, and Frank, taking the flag of truce, sprang out, and walked up the bank to where a group of officers was standing.

"Wal, Yank, what do you want now?" inquired a man dressed in the uniform of a colonel.

How Frank started when he heard that voice. Could he be mistaken? He had certainly heard it before, and he remembered the time when it had given an order which still rang in his ears: "Stiles, you stay here until this man dies." He looked at the men, some of whom were lying on the ground about the levee, and others standing at a little distance, waiting to hear what was going to be the result of the interview, and

what had at first appeared a vague suspicion, now forced itself upon Frank as a dread reality. He was in the presence of *Colonel Harrison and the Louisiana Wild-cats*. Nothing but a bold front could save him, for he knew that these men paid very little respect to a flag of truce, unless it was likely to further their own interests; and if he should be recognized, his recapture was certain, and then, what would be his fate? Would not summary vengeance be taken upon him, in retaliation for the manner in which he had treated the sentinel on the night of his escape, and the way he had served the man who had overtaken him in the woods? Brave as Frank was, and accustomed as he had become to look danger in the face, he could not but regard his situation as critical in the extreme.

“What did you say your business was, Yank?” inquired the colonel again.

“I wish to see the commanding officer,” said Frank, steadily meeting the rebel’s searching glance. “I wish permission to bury our dead.”

“Well, that’s a fair request,” said the colonel, carelessly. “I don’t know as I have any objection to it. Want your prisoners also?”

"Yes, sir," answered Frank, with a smile. "I should like to take them back to the ship with me. But you know that I have none to exchange for them."

"That's what I thought. I could n't afford to give your men back for nothing."

"I didn't suppose you would. But have we your permission to come ashore and bury our dead?" inquired Frank, who was anxious to bring the interview to an end.

"Yes," answered the colonel, "and we will leave the field in your possession. You will send that message by one of your men, for I don't think, youngster, that you can go back. If I am not very much mistaken, I've got a better right to you than any one else."

"Yes, colonel," shouted one of the men, "I'll be dog-gone if I didn't think he was the chap that give us the slip at Shreveport."

"I didn't think I could be mistaken," said the colonel. "So, youngster, just consider yourself a prisoner."

"What do you mean, sir? You have no claim whatever upon me, and never had!" exclaimed Frank, indignantly. "I am acting in obedience to

orders, and am under the protection of this flag of truce."

"Very well spoken. But what do you suppose we care for that dish-rag? Besides, I say we *have* a good claim upon you, for you have never been exchanged. Here, Jim!" he shouted to one of his men, "put this little Yank with the rest, and don't give him a chance to get away this time."

The man advanced to obey the order, and when he came up to the place where Frank was standing, he seized him by the hair and shook him until every tooth in his head rattled.

"Avast heavin' there, you land-lubber!" shouted the mate, who until this time had remained in the boat with the crew; and, springing ashore, he ran up the bank, and with one blow of his fist felled the rebel to the ground.

"Here we have it," said the colonel, who, instead of defending Frank, seemed to consider the manner in which he was treated a good joke. "Boys, secure this blue-jacket also."

"No you do n't, Johnny!" exclaimed the mate, as one of the men sprang forward to seize him. "If you think that one of you is as good as five

Yankee sailors, now is your chance to try it on. It'll take more'n one of you to put the bracelets on me;" and, as he spoke, he planted another of his tremendous blows in the face of the advancing rebel, which lifted him completely off his feet. But before he had time to repeat it, he was overpowered by half a dozen rebels, who had run to the assistance of their comrade. After a hard struggle, he was secured, and his hands were bound behind his back.

"Now, you fellows," said the colonel, addressing himself to the men in the boat, "get back to your vessel; tell the captain how matters stand, and also that he may come ashore and bury his dead as soon as he chooses."

"Tell the first division," said the mate, "that the next time they go into action they must give one shot for Jack Waters. If you fellers don't pay for this," he continued, turning to the rebels, "then blast my to'-gallant top-lights."

"Tell the captain," chimed in Frank, "that he had better not trust these men again, for they are not sufficiently civilized to know what a flag of truce is."

"You are very complimentary, young man, to

say the least," said a rebel, who was standing near the colonel.

"I am telling the plain truth," answered Frank, "and you will find that your barbarous mode of warfare will never succeed; and that the crew of that vessel will never allow the mean action of which you have been guilty to pass unnoticed."

"Douse my top-lights but that's the truth," said the mate, making an effort with his confined hands to salute his officer.


"See that these prisoners are well secured," said the colonel, "and be sure and take special care of that youngster, for if you allow him the least chance, he'll escape," and the colonel turned on his heel and walked away.

In obedience to these instructions, Frank and the mate were delivered into the charge of a sergeant, who at once conducted them toward the place where the prisoners which had been taken during the fight were confined under guard. As they passed along through the rebels, they were insulted at every step, and finally a man drew his ramrod out of his gun, and seizing Frank by the collar, proceeded to give him a severe thrash-

ing. Frank immediately appealed to the sergeant, who, instead of offering to defend him, stood at a little distance, watching the operation, as if not at all concerned. The mate was fairly beside himself with rage, and struggled desperately to free his hands, all the while venting his anger by "dousing" his "top-lights" and "shivering" his own "timbers." The rebel continued his punishment amid the cheers of his companions, and at every stroke of his ramrod he exclaimed: "Shot the best blood-hound in Louisiana, did ye! Stick a bayonet into young Davis, won't ye!" until Frank, smarting with the pain, determined to defend himself.

"Unhand me, you scoundrel!" he shouted; "I've had just about enough of this." Turning fiercely upon his persecutor, he snatched the ramrod from his hand, and commenced laying it over his head and shoulders. The rebel, after trying in vain to defend himself, retreated precipitately, amid the jeers of his comrades, and shouts of derision from the mate. The sergeant here thought it time to interfere, and Frank and the mate were not again molested.

CHAPTER VI.

An Old Acquaintance.

HEY found that the rebels had captured nearly twenty of their men, several of them badly wounded, and, as there was no surgeon with the enemy, the poor fellows were suffering intensely. Frank shuddered when he thought of the inhuman treatment to which his wounded companions had been subjected by the very men in whose power they now were, on the march from Vicksburg to Shreveport; and he knew, from the scenes through which he had just passed, that the Wild-cats had not grown more lenient in their treatment of those who were so unfortunate as to fall into their power. As soon as they were placed under guard, Jack's hands were unbound, and he seated himself on the ground beside his officer, in no very amiable mood.

"It is n't for myself that I care, sir," said he; "but I am afraid that the treatment you will receive will be a heap worse nor keel-haulin' on a cold winter's mornin'."

"Don't talk so loud, Jack," whispered Frank, glancing toward the guard, who was walking his beat but a short distance from them. "I've been in just such scrapes as this before, and I'm not going to be strung up. If they give me the least chance for life, I'm going to take advantage of it."

"There comes a boat from the ship, sir," said the mate. "If we could only give them the slip now."

"No, sit still; we are watched too closely; wait until to-night."

In a short time the cutter reached the shore, and an officer, whom they recognized as the gunner, sprang out with a flag of truce in his hand. He walked straight up to Colonel Harrison. After a short conversation with that individual, he handed him a letter, and, accompanied by a rebel officer, approached the place where Frank was sitting.

"Well, old fellow," he said, as he came up,

"I'm sorry to see you in this fix. But I've got good news for you. The colonel has given me permission to inform you that you will be well treated as long as you remain a prisoner. You see, we happen to have a prisoner who belongs to this regiment on board the flag-ship, and the captain is going to ask the admiral to exchange him for you. So keep a stiff upper lip. Don't think of trying to escape, and we shall see you on board of the ship again in less than a week. Good-by."

"Frank and the mate shook hands with the gunner, who walked back to the place where he had left his men, and set them to work collecting and burying the dead.

After considerable trouble, an agreement was entered into between Captain Wilson and the colonel, and all the prisoners, with the exception of Frank and the mate, were paroled and allowed to return on board the vessel, after which the Wild-cats mounted their horses and commenced marching back into the country. While the fight had been raging, their horses were safely hidden in the woods, out of range of the Ticonderoga's guns; and when they were brought out, Frank, although he had not seen either a dead or wounded rebel,

was able to judge pretty accurately of the number that had been disabled in the struggle, by counting the empty saddles. What had been done with the dead and wounded he could not ascertain; but the probability was, that the latter had been carried on in advance of the main body of the regiment, and the former hastily buried on the field. The prisoners were each given a horse, and Frank was a good deal surprised to find that although the mate was closely watched, scarcely any attention was paid to himself; his captors, no doubt, thinking that he would prefer waiting to be exchanged, rather than run the risk of the punishment that had been threatened in case he was detected in any attempt at escape. He was given to understand that it was useless to think of flight, for he would certainly be recaptured, even if he succeeded in getting outside of the pickets, and that he would be shot down without mercy. But Frank, who well knew that the rebels would not willingly lose an opportunity of regaining one of their officers, was not at all intimidated by these threats; and, as he had not bound himself to remain a passive prisoner, he commenced laying his plans for escape, intending to put them into

operation at the very first opportunity which offered.

Just before dark the column halted in front of a plantation, and commenced making its camp on each side of the road. While the men were making their preparations for the night, the colonel, who evidently preferred more comfortable quarters than could be found in the open air, repaired to the house, where he was cordially greeted by its inmates.

Frank and the mate lay down on the ground by the side of the road, and were talking over the incidents of the day, when a dashing young lieutenant stepped up, and inquired :

"Yanks, do n't you want something to eat? Come into our mess; we want to talk to you. I'll hold myself responsible for their safe return," he continued, turning to the guard.

This individual, after a few moments' consideration, concluded that the "Yanks could pass," and the prisoners followed the lieutenant to the place where the members of the mess to which he belonged were seated on the ground, eating their suppers.

"Sit down, Yanks, at the very first good place

you can find," said their host. "Our chairs have been sent on board one of your gun-boats to be repaired, and the sofa has n't come in yet. Do you ever have as good a supper as this on board your men-o'-war?"

"O yes," replied Frank, glancing at the different dishes that were scattered about over the ground, which contained corn-bread just raked out from the ashes, salt pork, onions, and boiled chicken, the latter evidently the fruits of a raid on some well-stocked hen-roost. "O yes, we live very well on board our boats. There is nothing to hinder us, if we have a caterer worth a cent."

"Where do you get your grub?" asked the lieutenant. "We steal every thing along the shore that we can lay our hands on, just to keep it away from you, and there are no provisions at the North."

"Well, you need not believe any such story as that," answered Frank, who could not help laughing outright at the idea of the people at the North having no provisions to spare. "I never knew a gun-boat to be short of rations, except down the Yazoo Pass."

"Well. then, some of our folks tell what is not

the truth," said one of the officers, who had not yet spoken. "But, to change the subject, how many men did you lose in the action to-day?"

"I am not able to tell," replied Frank. "I see that you have taken good care to hide your loss. I have n't seen a single wounded man since I have been with you, and I know I saw several drop during the fight."

"Yes, we did lose a few men," said the lieutenant; "how many, you will never know. But, to change the subject again, what did you come down here to fight us for?"

"Now, see here," said Frank, setting down his plate, which had been plentifully supplied by the lieutenant, "you were kind enough to ask me here to get some supper, and I don't want to spoil a good meal by entering into a political discussion; for, if I answer your question, I shall tell you some pretty plain things, and I know you will get provoked at me."

"O no, we are not as unreasonable as that," replied the man. "Answer my question."

"Well, then," said Frank, "I will make the same reply as I once did to that question in the prison at Shreveport. It is this: I believe that if

ever there was a lot of men in the world who need a good, sound thrashing, you rebels do."

"That's the truth, sir," said Jack, talking as plainly as a mouthful of salt pork would permit. "Stand up for the old flag, sir."

The discussion thus commenced was maintained for an hour, the rebels evincing the utmost ignorance in regard to the principles for which they were fighting; and the manner in which Frank knocked their flimsy arguments right and left, and the fearlessness with which he upheld the course the government has pursued, and predicted the speedy overthrow of the rebellion, excited their respect and admiration.

At length bedtime came, and, just as Frank and the mate were about to be conducted back to the guard, Colonel Harrison, accompanied by two ladies and a strange officer, walked up.

"Here, Yank," he exclaimed, addressing Frank, "here's an old acquaintance of yours. Come here."

As Frank obeyed the order, the strange officer advanced to meet him, and he recognized Lieutenant Somers. He was not at all pleased to see him, for the lieutenant, doubtless, had not forgot-

ten the circumstances connected with his capture, and although he could not remember of ever having treated him badly, still he feared he might harbor some feelings of malice, and might see fit to take a summary revenge upon him. To his surprise, however, the rebel eagerly advanced to meet him, and, extending his hand, greeted him with :

“How are you, Nelson? You’re in a fix, I see. I am the free man now, and you the prisoner.”

“Yes,” answered Frank, “I’m in for it again, Although I was captured in violation of all the rules of war, I suppose I must submit to it for awhile.”

The lieutenant passed nearly an hour in conversation with him, talking over all the little incidents that had happened while he was a prisoner in the hands of Frank and his fellow-fugitives, and was compelled to pilot them through the country, and ended by saying :

“Although you were sometimes obliged to use me rather roughly, you did the best you could under the circumstances, and I shall let you see that I don’t forget favors. I’ll speak to the

colonel, and get him to furnish you with quarters at the plantation to-night."

The lieutenant then left them, and shortly afterward a corporal and his guard came up, and conducted Frank and the mate to the plantation, where they were confined in a deserted negro cabin. A few blankets had been spread out on the floor to serve as a bed, and, had they been among friends, they could have passed a very comfortable night.

As soon as the corporal had locked the door and retired, the mate, who had been examining their quarters, said:

"I wish, sir, that lieutenant had n't taken so much interest in you, 'cause we're in Darby now, sure."

"We are much better off than we would be out in the camp," answered Frank. "Try that window-shutter—carefully, 'now.'"

The mate did as he was ordered, and, to Frank's joy, reported that it was unfastened.

"Now," said the latter, "the next thing is to ascertain where the sentries are posted."

"There's one out aft here," replied the mate, "'cause I can see him; and there's one at the

gangway for'ard, 'cause I heered the corporal tell him to keep a good look-out."

"We must wait until the camp is still," said Frank, "and then we will make the attempt."

For two long hours the prisoners sat on their rough bed—the mate, in accordance with the discipline to which he had been accustomed from boyhood, waiting for his officer to speak, and Frank listening for the advent of that silence which should proclaim that the time for action had arrived.

Eleven o'clock came at length, when, just after the sentry's cry of "All's well," Frank arose to his feet, and cautiously approaching the window, pushed open the shutter and looked out. The sentry was seated on the ground at the corner of the cabin, holding his musket across his knees, now and then stretching his arms, and yawning. Jack remained seated on the bed, while Frank debated long and earnestly with himself as to what course it was best to pursue. Should they spring out and overpower the sentry where he sat? This could not be accomplished without a fight, for the sentry was a large, powerful-looking man, and, without doubt, possessed of

great strength; besides, if a struggle did ensue, the noise would attract the attention of the guard at the other side of the cabin, who would lend prompt assistance, and, with these two men opposed to them, escape would be impossible. Still, there seemed to be no other course for them to pursue, and Frank had already proposed the plan to the mate, and was about to push open the shutter and make the attempt, when he noticed that the sentinel had leaned his head against the cabin, and was sleeping soundly.

“Jack,” he whispered, “get out of this window quickly, and make the best of your way into those bushes,” pointing to a thicket that stood about twenty feet from the cabin. “As soon as I see you safe, I will follow. Don’t make any noise now.”

The mate touched his cap, lingered for an instant to press Frank’s hand, then mounted lightly into the window, reached the ground without arousing the rebel, and, in a moment more, disappeared in the bushes. Frank was about to follow when the sentry suddenly awakened, rubbed his eyes, gazed vacantly about him, and then sank back to his former position. As

soon as Frank felt certain that he was asleep, he again opened the shutter, descended noiselessly to the ground, and, after carefully closing the window, sprang into the bushes.

"Shiver my timbers, sir," whispered Jack, seizing his officer's hand, "that was well done. Won't the Johnnies be surprised when they call all hands in the morning, and find us missin'?"

But the fugitives were by no means safe, neither had their escape been accomplished. They were still inside of the lines, and might, at any moment, stumble upon a picket. But it was necessary that they should get as far away from the camp as possible before their escape became discovered, and Frank, without waiting to receive the congratulations of the mate, who now looked upon their escape as a certain thing, threw himself on his hands and knees, and moved slowly across a field that extended a mile back of the cabin, and which must be crossed before they could reach the woods. Their progress was slow and laborious, and it was two hours before they reached a road which ran in the direction in which they supposed the river to lie. Not having seen any pickets, and now feeling quite certain

that they were outside of the lines, they arose to their feet, and commenced running at the top of their speed. The road ran through a thick woods, but they had no difficulty in following it, as the moon was shining brightly. Just before daylight, they arrived at the Mississippi. It was a pleasant sight to their eyes, and both uttered a shout of joy when they found themselves standing on its banks. But their spirits fell again, when, on glancing up and down the river as far as their eyes could reach, they could not see a vessel of any kind in sight. They were not yet at their journey's end. There might be a gun-boat close by, hid behind one of the numerous points that stretched out into the river, or there might not be one within a hundred miles. They must not linger, however, for they were not free from pursuit until they were safe on board some vessel.

Sorrowfully they bent their steps down the river, listening for sounds of pursuit, and eagerly watching for signs of an approaching steamer; but the day wore away, and the fugitives, who began to feel the effects of hunger, halted, and were debating upon the means to be used in

procuring food, when, to their joy, they discovered smoke around a bend, and, in half an hour, a transport, loaded with soldiers, appeared in sight. They at once commenced waving their hats, to attract the attention of those on board, who evidently saw them, but being suspicious that it was a plan of the rebels to decoy them into shore, turned off toward the opposite bank.

“I should think they ought to see us,” said Frank, and he commenced shouting at the top of his lungs. A moment afterward a puff of smoke arose from the forecastle, and a twelve-pounder shot plowed through the water, and lodged in the bank at their very feet. It was then evident to them that they had been taken for rebels. After watching the boat until it disappeared, they again turned their faces down the river. Night overtaking them without bringing any relief, the fugitives, hungry and foot-sore, lay down in the woods and slept.

CHAPTER VII.

A Close Shave.

WHEN the morning came they bent their steps down the bank, keeping in the edge of the woods to prevent surprise, but not far enough from the river to allow any boat that might chance to pass to escape their observation. They again began to feel the fierce pangs of hunger, which they endeavored to alleviate by chewing twigs and roots. But this affording them no relief, the mate finally proposed that they should turn back into the country and ask for food at the first house they could find. Recapture was preferable to starving to death. Frank easily turned him from his purpose by assuring him that they would certainly be picked up during the afternoon, or on the following morning. But

night came, without bringing them any relief, and the tired and hungry fugitives again lay down in the woods and slept.

About noon, on the next day, they found themselves on the banks of a wide and deep ravine, that ran across their path. To climb up and down those steep banks was impossible; their wasted strength was not equal to the task. Their only course was to follow the ravine back into the woods until they could find some means of crossing it. After wearily dragging themselves for two hours over fallen logs, and through thick, tangled bushes and cane-brakes that lay in their path, they emerged from the woods, and found before them a small log-hut, standing close to a bridge that spanned the ravine. Hastily drawing back into the bushes, they closely examined the premises, which seemed to be deserted, with the exception of a negro, whom they saw hitching a mule to a tree at the back of the cabin.

"I don't see any white men there, Jack," said Frank. "I think we may safely ask that negro for something to eat. I hardly think there is any danger, for, if he should attempt mischief, we

could soon overpower him. What do you say? Shall we go up?"

"Just as you say, sir," answered the mate. "But let us first get something to use as a belaying-pin, in case any body should run foul of our hawse."

The fugitives procured two short clubs, and moved out of the woods toward the cabin. The negro immediately discovered them. At first, he rolled up his eyes in surprise, and acted very much as if he was about to retreat; but, after finding that the two sailors were alone, his face assumed a broad grin, which the fugitives took for a smile of welcome.

When they had approached within speaking distance, Frank inquired:

"Well, uncle, is there any chance for a hungry man to get any thing to eat in here?"

"Plenty ob it, massa," answered the negro. "Go right in de nouse."

The fugitives, far from suspecting any treachery, were about to comply; but Frank, who was in advance, had scarcely put his foot on the threshold, when two rebel soldiers sprang out of the cabin, and one of them, seizing him by the

collar, flourished a huge bowie-knife above his head and demanded his surrender. So sudden was the assault that Frank, for a moment, was deprived of all power of action. But not so with the mate, who, retaining his presence of mind, swung his club about him with a dexterity truly surprising, and brought it down with all the force of his sturdy arms upon the head of the rebel, who, instantly releasing his hold, sank to the ground with a low groan. But before he could repeat the blow, three more soldiers sprang from the cabin, and, in spite of their struggles, overpowered them; not, however, until the mate had been stunned by a blow from the butt of a pistol.

“Wal, I’ll be dog-gone!” exclaimed one of the rebels, “but this is a lucky haul of Yankees. Tom, get some water and throw it into the captain’s face,” pointing to their prostrate companion, “an’ fetch him to. The rest of you, get some ropes an’ tie these fellers’ hands behind them.”

While the men were executing these orders. Frank had time to scan the countenances of his captors. They evidently did not belong to the

Wild cats, for, although that regiment was composed of most ferocious-looking men, they appeared like gentlemen compared with those in whose power he now found himself. These were a dirty, ragged, blood-thirsty looking set of men, and, unless their countenances belied them, they were capable of any atrocity.

Presently, the men who had gone into the cabin returned with some pieces of cord, with which they proceeded to confine the hands of their prisoners, who offered no resistance. By the time this was accomplished, the man whom the mate had handled so roughly had been restored to consciousness, and supported himself against the cabin to collect his thoughts, while the others stood silently by, as if awaiting his orders.

"Get every thing ready," he said, at length, "and let the job be done at once. It needs no judge or jury to decide the fate of these men, knowing, as we do, what has befallen those of our number who were so unfortunate as to fall into the hands of the Federals."

The rebels, in obedience to the order, brought out of the cabin two pieces of rope, which they took to a tree that stood close by, and, coiling

them up in their hands, threw one end over a limb that stretched out about six feet from the ground, and fastened them there.

"Douse my top-lights," exclaimed the mate, as he witnessed these proceedings, "but it is all up with us, sir. They're going to swing us to the yard-arm."

The horrid truth was too apparent, and Frank was so completely unnerved that he was compelled to lean against the cabin for support. He was soon aroused by the voice of the leader of the rebels, who said :

"This is to be done in retaliation for an order issued by Admiral Porter, stating that he would hang all 'guerrillas,' as he termed them, who might be caught firing into transports along the river. You can see the effect of that order right here. Out of a company of a hundred of us who entered the army at the commencement of the war, you see all that are left. The remainder have been killed or captured by you gun-boat men. Those captured have suffered the penalty of that order. They were no more guerrillas, however, than you are, but were regularly sworn into the service, and were detailed to harass the

enemy in every possible manner; and, for obeying our orders, some of us have been strung up like dogs. We shall continue to retaliate on you until our government receives notice that the order has been countermanded. I will give you an hour, and at the end of that time you must swing."

"If you must execute us," said Frank, in a husky voice, "why not let us die like men, and not like criminals?"

"My men would have preferred to be shot," said the rebel, "but were not allowed the privilege of choosing." So saying, the captain turned on his heel and walked away, while Frank seated himself on the threshold of the cabin, and repeated his sentence with a calmness that made him think his senses were leaving him. Could it be possible that he had heard aright, and that he was in reality a condemned man? When he had entered the service, the thought that he should be killed had never once occurred to him. He had fully and confidently expected that he would be permitted to live to see the end of the war, and to return home to enjoy the society of his friends once more. Could it be possible,

then, that, after indulging in such bright anticipations, he must end his life in that desolate place, away from home and friends, in so terrible a manner? He could not convince himself that it was a reality. But there was the tree, with the ropes, and the fatal noose at the end, dangling from the limb; and there were those blood-thirsty looking men lounging in the shade, and only waiting until the hour granted by their leader should expire to begin their horrid work. O, the agony of that moment, when he could look forward and count the very seconds he had to live! An hour! How often and how lightly had he spoken of it! For an hour in the life of one moving about at freedom in the world, not knowing when death will come, and, as is too often the case, scarcely giving the matter a moment's thought, is a space of time of very little importance; is carelessly spoken of, and, when passed, no notice is taken of its flight. But an hour to a person condemned to die, who has heard his sentence, and who is bound, and watched over by armed men, that he may not escape from that sentence; who is in the full possession of all his faculties; who can look abroad upon the beauties of nature, and feel the soft

breeze of heaven fanning his cheek, but who knows that, at the end of that time, he will be deprived of all these faculties; that his life will be suddenly and terribly terminated—in the case of such a person, who can describe the thoughts that “make up the sum of his heart’s fevered existence?”

It seemed to Frank that scarcely five minutes of the allotted time had passed, when the leader of the guerrillas arose from the ground where he had been sitting. The signal was understood by his men, two of whom approached the prisoners, and conducted them toward the scaffold. The mate had been encouraged by the example set him by his officer, and both walked with firm steps; their faces, although pale as death itself, being as expressionless as marble, and bearing not the slightest trace of the struggle that was going on within them. Without the least hesitation they took their stand on a log under the tree, and the fatal ropes were adjusted. Their farewells had been said, and the leader of the rebels had made a signal for the log to be removed from under their feet, when suddenly there was a sound of approaching horsemen, and the next moment a

party of the Wild-cats galloped up, headed by Colonel Harrison and Lieutenant Somers. A few harshly-spoken orders rung in Frank's ears; he saw the leader of the guerrillas fall, pierced by a dozen bullets, and then all was blank to him.

* * * * *

Let us now return to the Wild-cats, whom Frank and the mate had so unceremoniously deserted.

The escape was not discovered until morning, when the orderly sergeant went to the cabin to call them. It was scarcely daylight, and quite dark inside of the cabin, and as the sergeant opened the door, he vociferated:

"Come, Yanks! get out of this and get your grub!"

The echo of his own voice was the only reply he received. After waiting a moment, he repeated the summons in a louder tone, and still received no answer.

"I'll be dog-gone if them ar Yanks don't sleep at the rate of more'n forty miles an hour," said the sergeant to himself, as he entered the cabin and commenced feeling around in the dark to find his prisoners. "Come now, Yanks!" he exclaimed, "none of your tricks. I know you

heered me. Get up, I say, and get your grub, for it is high time we were movin'."

Still no answer. The rebel finally threw open the window-shutter, and by the straggling rays of light that came in, he found, to his utter amazement, that his prisoners were gone. With one bound he reached the open air, and without paying any attention to the inquiries of the guard as to what was the cause of his strange behavior, he started for the house, where he hurriedly asked for the colonel.

"What's the matter now, sergeant?" inquired that gentleman, appearing at the door with his boots in his hand.

"The prisoners, sir," began the sergeant——

"Well, what's the trouble with them?" asked the colonel, who was very far from guessing the facts of the case. "Won't the lazy Yankees get up? Punch 'em with your bayonet a little if they get unruly; that will put life into them, and keep them civil at the same time."

"I could manage them easy enough, sir, if they were here," answered the sergeant; "but, sir, they"——

"If they were *here*," repeated the colonel, who

now began to suspect the truth. "If they were here! Have you allowed them to escape?"

"No, sir, we didn't *let* them; they went without asking us!"

"A plague on you lazy scoundrels," shouted the colonel, in a rage. "Let loose that bloodhound at once, and pursue them. No; stop! Tell the officer of the day that I want to see him."

The sergeant started off to execute the order; and the colonel, after pulling on his boots, entered the house, where Lieutenant Somers and the people of the plantation were assembled, awaiting breakfast.

"What's the matter, colonel?" inquired the lieutenant. "Any thing wrong?"

"Don't bother me with your foolish questions now," replied the colonel roughly, pacing up and down the floor with angry strides. "It's enough to upset any one's patience. That little Yankee has escaped again."

"Escaped!" repeated all in the room, holding up their hands in astonishment.

"Yes; escaped—gone—mizzled—cleared out," said the colonel, frantically flourishing his arms

above his head; "and unless I catch him, which I don't expect to do, I'm short a captain, for he was to have been exchanged for one of my officers."

At this moment the officer of the day entered, and the colonel, turning to him, continued:

"That rascally little Yankee has escaped again. I thought I had him safe this time, but he has succeeded in giving me the slip when I least expected it. That sailor that we captured with him has gone too. Send a squad in pursuit of them at once. Use the blood-hound, but hold him in the leash, and don't injure either of the prisoners if you can avoid it."

The officer bowed, and left the room; and the colonel, after giving orders that the case should be investigated, in order to see who was to blame in allowing the prisoners to escape, mounted his horse, and, accompanied by Lieutenant Somers, set out in pursuit of the squad, which had already started and was following the trail of the fugitives, led by a large blood-hound, which was kept in check by a chain held by one of the men. In a couple of hours they arrived at the place where Frank and the mate had been fired upon by the

steamer, and here the trail was lost. After several hours spent in unavailing search, the squad separated, and, for two days, scoured the country every-where, looking in vain for traces of the fugitives.

At the end of that time, the colonel, completely disheartened, collected his forces, and was returning to the plantation, when they were met by a negro, in a great state of excitement, who anxiously inquired for the commanding officer.

"Get away from me, boy," shouted the colonel, impatiently, "and don't bother me now."

"But, sar," persisted the negro, "Massa Thorne done kitched two white gemman, an' be gwine to kill 'em, shore."

"Bill Thorne in this part of the country again!" said the colonel. "He'd better keep clear of me. He and his pack of horse-thieves are more injury to us than a Yankee gun-boat;" and the colonel, without waiting to hear any more, put spurs to his horse, and galloped off.

"These two white men he caught," said Lieutenant Somers, "what were they? Yankees?"

The negro replied in the affirmative, and then proceeded to give a full and complete description

of the prisoners, so that the lieutenant knew in a moment that they were Frank and the mate. After questioning him as to the locality where the execution was to take place, he galloped down the road, and soon overtook the colonel, to whom he related the circumstance. The latter at once ordered part of his men to follow him, (directing the others to keep on the trail, so that, in case the negro was misleading them, no time would be lost.) As we have seen, he arrived just in time to save his prisoners; one moment more, and he would have been too late.

The guerrillas were so completely surprised at the approach of the cavalry, and so dismayed at the death of their leader, that they did not think of retreat until it was too late. The Wild-cats had surrounded them, and the sight of half a dozen revolvers leveled at their heads caused them to throw down their weapons and cry for quarter.

CHAPTER VIII.

Taking Down the Captain.



WHEN Frank's consciousness returned, he found himself lying on the floor of the cabin, where the fight had taken place which resulted in his capture by the guerrillas, his head supported by a dirty blanket, rolled up to serve as a pillow, and the mate sitting on a three-legged chair beside him. Through the open door could be seen a squad of the Wild-cats, lounging under the shade of the trees.

Slowly the recollection of the scenes through which he had passed, the sentence he had heard pronounced, the preparations he had seen made for his execution, came to his mind, and he instinctively put his hand to his throat, as if expecting to find it encircled by the fatal rope.

"Are you on an even keel now, my hearty?" asked the mate.

"Where are the guerrillas, Jack?" asked Frank.

"Are we safe?"

"O yes, we're safe from them, but we are still prisoners."

At this moment a shaggy head, nearly covered up with a slouch hat, was thrust in at the door, and a voice inquired:

"Are you all right now, Yank? If you are, come out here, for we must be off."

Frank, although very weak, was able, with the assistance of the mate, to walk out of the cabin, where they found several of the rebels mounted, and waiting for them. They were each given a horse, after which the Wild-cats closed about their prisoners, as if to put all further attempts at escape out of the question, and conducted them down the road at a rapid gallop.

As soon as Frank's ideas had fairly returned, he began to make inquiries in regard to the singular manner in which he and the mate had been rescued, and learned that the men by whom they had been captured were guerrillas, in spite of what they had said to the contrary; that they

made war on rebel as well as Union people, and being especially obnoxious to Colonel Harrison—from whom they had stolen several horses—they had been summarily disposed of. At first Frank could scarcely credit the statement that they had been rescued through the agency of the very negro to whom they owed their capture; but, after being assured that such was the case, it occurred to them that their approach had first been discovered by the rebels in the cabin, and that the negro, to save his own life, had acted in obedience to their orders; and then, to make amends for what had at first appeared to be an act of treachery, he had conveyed the news of their capture to Colonel Harrison.

As soon as they had fairly started, the orderly sergeant galloped up beside Frank, and inquired:

“Yank, how did you get out of that cabin that night? Nobody don’t seem to know nothing about it.”

“I have already told him, sir,” said the mate, “that we walked by the sentinel when he was asleep; but he don’t believe it.”

Frank then proceeded to give an account of the manner in which their escape had been effected,

and as it corresponded with the mate's story, the sergeant was compelled to believe it.

"Purty well done," said he. "But, mind you, don't go to tryin' it on agin, 'cause, if you do, it's the colonel's orders that you both go in double irons."

Having delivered this piece of information, the sergeant rode up to the head of the column. The prisoners did not again attempt to escape, for they knew that it would be an impossibility. They were closely watched, not a single movement escaping observation. Wherever they went, two stalwart rebels were at their heels; and when they slept, their guards stood over them with loaded muskets. That same evening they overtook the main body of the regiment, and on the sixth day after their rescue from the guerrillas, they arrived opposite the village of Napoleon, where the exchange was to take place. The Ticonderoga was not there, but two days afterward she made her appearance; and, as soon as she had dropped her anchor, a boat was seen approaching the shore with a flag of truce flying in the bow. The colonel waved his handkerchief in reply. As the boat drew near, Frank saw two

men in rebel uniform seated in the stern-sheets, and he knew, from the remarks made by the Wild-cats, that one of them was the officer for whom he was to be exchanged.

As soon as the boat touched the shore, the executive officer sprang out, followed by the two rebels. After a moment's conversation with the colonel, the former advanced toward Frank and the mate, and, after greeting them cordially, exclaimed :

“Come aboard the ship, boys ; you belong to Uncle Sam once more.”

The mate could scarcely believe that he, too, was exchanged. He had expected nothing less than a long confinement in Vicksburg, or perhaps a march to Shreveport ; but, as it happened, the captain of the Ticonderoga had found a rebel soldier on board the flag-ship, and had obtained permission from the admiral to exchange him for the mate.

“Yes, Yanks,” said the colonel, “you are at liberty to make yourselves scarce as soon as you choose.”

The prisoners lingered only to shake hands with Lieutenant Somers, who had treated them

very kindly, and had often found means to procure them many little privileges and comforts, and then ran down the bank and sprang into the boat, which at once pushed from the shore and started toward the Ticonderoga. As Frank came over the side, the officers crowded around him, asking innumerable questions in relation to the treatment he had received while in the hands of the rebels; but he was scarcely allowed time to answer one-half of their inquiries before he was summoned into the presence of the captain.

That gentleman greeted him in the most cordial manner, requesting him to be seated and relate his adventures. Frank gave a minute description of the manner in which he had transacted the business intrusted to him with the flag of truce, his recapture by the Wild-cats, and the circumstances that had led to the retention of the boatswain's mate; recounted the plans he had laid for their escape, their reception by the guerrillas, and, finally, the rescue from a horrible death, to all of which the captain listened attentively. After Frank had finished, the captain said:

"It is, of course, needless to say that I am overjoyed to see you safe on board the ship

again, Mr. Nelson, and that you have returned none the worse for your sojourn among the rebels. I am especially glad, because I wish to make you an explanation. You have been misrepresented to me, and I was very hasty in reprimanding you as I did on the day that you behaved so gallantly in the fight at Cypress Bend. It was on account of the report of Mr. Howe, who assumed command of the expedition after the captain had been killed. His report showed that we had been severely whipped; and when I learned what a slaughter there had been of the men I placed under your command, and which I find, upon inquiry, was caused by the ignorance of your superior officer, and not by any fault of your own—I say, when I heard of this, I was so completely disheartened that I scarcely knew what I was about. It was the first time that ever an expedition that I had planned failed, and also the first time in my life that I ever gave the order to retreat; and as I had every reason to hope for success, you can have some idea of how I felt. After you had gone, many facts came to light, of which no mention was made in Mr. Howe's report, and with which I was, of course, unacquainted, and I find

that I have done you a great injustice. If ever a man earned a shoulder-strap, you did at that fight. I have, however, sent in your application for a court of inquiry, and have also represented the case to the admiral. As soon as we arrive at the flag-ship, you will report to him, and he will investigate the case."

Frank, as can easily be imagined, listened to this statement with a much lighter heart than when he had received that unjust reprimand. After the captain had finished questioning him in relation to incidents that had transpired during his captivity, he left the cabin, and went forward into the steerage, where he found his mess just sitting down to dinner.

"Well, Frank," exclaimed Keys, as the former entered and took his place at the table, "was the captain glad to see you?"

"Yes, he appeared to be," replied Frank.

"I thought as much. He has been as uneasy as a fish out of water ever since you were captured. He told the executive officer that if there was any thing he had ever done that he regretted, it was that he had given you that blowing up. He said that he had no right to talk to you as he

did, and that he would make amends for it at the very first opportunity."

"Did he?" inquired Mr. French, eagerly. "I was certain that the navy regulations state distinctly that the captain of a vessel has no right to reprimand an officer, and that, if he does do it, he can be made to apologize. He once gave me a blowing up, and said that I was of no more account on this ship than an extra boiler; and, if he has apologized to Mr. Nelson, he must do the same by me. I'll go and see him immediately after dinner."

The effect of this speech on the older members of the mess can be easily imagined. They looked at Mr. French for a moment, to see if he was really in earnest, and then burst into a fit of the most uproarious laughter. The idea of forcing the captain of a gun-boat to apologize to one of his subordinate officers for administering a reprimand that he really deserved, was ludicrous in the extreme. Mr. Keys was the only one who could keep a straight face. He, with his ready wit, at once saw that here was a capital chance to satisfy his love of mischief. He dropped his knife and fork, looked first at one, then at an-

other, and, when the noise had subsided, said, quietly :

“I don’t see where the laugh comes in. Perhaps some of you gentlemen think that an officer has no right to demand an apology from a superior ! Then I can tell you that you are very much mistaken, for I have got the whole thing in black and white, copied from the navy regulations ; and, if I was in Mr. French’s place, I would make the captain take back what he said, or I would report him.”

We must pause here, for a moment, to say that the result of Mr. French’s interview with the captain, when the former had complained that his rank was not respected, had become known. Mr. Keys, who had overheard every word of it, and who was one of those uneasy, mischief-loving fellows who always liked to see some one in hot water, considered the joke as too good to be kept, and had told it, confidentially of course, first to this officer, then to that one, until every person on board the ship had become acquainted with the particulars ; and thus far Mr. French had been compelled to bear the jokes of his mess-mates without any chance of obtaining redress.

However, he had discovered it at last. The captain had apologized to Frank, and he must do the same by him, if he wished to keep out of trouble. He was certain that he should succeed this time, for he knew that Keys had been in the service long enough to become well acquainted with its rules and regulations, and there was such apparent truthfulness and sincerity in what he said, that Mr. French was certain of bringing the captain to terms.

"Yes, sir," repeated Keys; "if my superior officer abuses me, I shall seek redress. Because a man wears three or four stripes of gold lace around his arms, he has no right to impose upon me."

"I shall see the captain about it as soon as I have finished my dinner," said Mr. French, decidedly.

"You had better let that job out," said the caterer, who, being a very quiet, staid sort of a person, did not wish to see any disturbance. "You will remember that you got a blowing up once for not taking my advice. I have been in the navy longer than you, and you had better listen to me."

"I know that you have more experience than myself," answered French; "but that experience doesn't tell you that a captain can use me as he pleases. I have rank as well as he has. Besides, you see, I have the advantage this time."

"Yes, sir," chimed in Keys, winking at Frank, who struggled hard to suppress a laugh, "and, if you will only push the matter, you will see some fun on this ship."

Here the subject was dropped. Immediately after dinner was finished, as usual, the officers all congregated under the awning on the main-deck. Mr. French walked up and down the deck, conversing earnestly with his two friends, who, entirely ignorant of what might be the consequences of such a step, were urging him to seek an interview with the captain, to demand an apology, which would certainly be given, and would show the ship's company that they *had* rank, and that it must be respected.

Frank had for some time missed Keys, and was wondering what had become of him, when he discovered that individual on his hands and knees behind the pilot-house, beckoning eagerly. Frank

walked toward him carelessly, so as not to attract the attention of Mr. French and his friends, and, as he came up, Keys said, in a hurried whisper:

"See here, Nelson; you know I told French that I had the rules and regulations all copied down in my order-book. Now, it has just occurred to me that he might want to see them; so I want to write something to show him. I can't get to my room without his seeing me, so I wish you would lend me your key."

Frank accordingly produced it; but his conscience reproved him when he thought in what an unpleasant position his friend was endeavoring to place Mr. French.

"Look here, Keys," said he, "I propose that you don't carry this joke any further. It will get the poor greenhorn in a bad fix."

"I can't help it," returned Keys. "I have often volunteered to give him advice, and have tried to convince him that if he ever wants to understand his business he must make use of somebody's experience besides his own. But he has always snapped me up very short. Now, if he wants to learn by experience, I'll help him all I can."

So saying, Keys crawled off on his hands and knees toward Frank's room, where he locked himself in, and the latter returned to the main-deck. About an hour afterward Keys made his appearance, walking rapidly across the deck, as if searching for something that he was in a great hurry to find, and thus attracted the attention of Mr. French and his two friends, who took him familiarly by the arm and led him forward, out of ear-shot of the other officers, who were still seated on the main-deck.

"See here, Keys," said French, "I understood you to say that you had the regulations in relation to the treatment of subordinate officers, copied in your order-book. Will you allow me to look at them?"

"Ah, yes," said Keys, "I remember. Here's something that relates to it;" and he produced his memorandum-book, and pointed to an article hastily written in lead pencil, which ran as follows:

"And be it further enacted: That, as in the maintenance of his authority over his officers on shipboard, it is rendered necessary that the commanding officer should, in all cases, treat his subordinates as gentlemen, all harsh words from a commanding officer to an officer of lower grade are

hereby strictly prohibited; and in all cases where the commander is guilty of a violation of this act, the person aggrieved shall be, and is hereby, authorized to seek redress."

"There, gentlemen," exclaimed Mr. French, after he had carefully read the article, "is an act of the American Congress, which authorizes me to seek redress. All harsh words in the navy are strictly forbidden; and if the captain does not apologize for what he said to me, I'll report him."

"You will please excuse me, gentlemen, for the present," said Keys, who was finding it exceedingly difficult to control himself. "The turret must be got ready for inspection at sundown;" and, thrusting the book in his pocket, he walked rapidly below.

Mr. French immediately moved aft, and, drawing himself up **very** stiffly, said to the orderly:

"Tell the captain that I have business with him."

The marine disappeared, and soon returned with a request that he would walk into the cabin. The captain was seated at his table, writing; but, as the mate entered, he dropped his pen, turned

in his chair, and waited for him to make known his wants

“Captain,” began Mr. French, hesitatingly, for he scarcely knew how to commence the conversation, “I— I— I— have been reading the navy regulations, and I find that I have been abused.”

“Who has abused you, sir?”

“Well, you see, sir,” began the mate——

“I asked you who had been abusing you, sir,” interrupted the captain. “Answer my question, and make your explanations afterward.”

“Well, sir, to come to the point, you have abused me, sir.”

The captain started back in surprise, and looked at the mate for several moments, as if to make sure that he was in his right mind, and then quietly asked :

“How have I abused you, sir?”

“In reprimanding me, sir. The navy regulations distinctly state that a commanding officer has no right to use harsh words to his subordinates; and I demand an apology.”

“Can you furnish me with a copy of those regulations?”

"Yes, sir; Mr. Keys has them," replied the mate; and he left the cabin, and commenced searching for that individual.


We should remark that Mr. Keys was pretty well aware that he would be likely to get himself into hot water. Wishing to delay the interview between himself and the captain as long as possible, he had retreated to the hold, where he appeared to be very busily engaged; but, as soon as Mr. French made known his errand, he readily produced his book, glad indeed that he was to be let off without seeing the captain. The mate carried it into the cabin. The captain read over the article several times, and then arose from his seat, and, going to one of the after-ports, appeared to be busily engaged with his own thoughts. Mr. French stood watching him with a smile of triumph, certain that the captain had been worsted, and that he would soon receive the required apology; but, had he been a keen observer, he would have seen that the captain was convulsed with laughter, which he was vainly endeavoring to conceal. He easily saw through the trick, and it reminded him of the days when he

was a midshipman, and had been implicated in similar jokes

“Mr. French,” said he, at length, “you may retire for a few moments. I will send for you presently. Orderly, tell Mr. Keys that I wish to see him.’”

CHAPTER IX.

A Practical Joke.

NELSON KEYS, who began to be really afraid that the plan he had adopted for assisting his green messmate to "learn by experience" was about to rebound with redoubled force on his own head, was found by the orderly in earnest conversation with Frank, to whom he always went for advice.

"It's getting hot, Nelson," said he. "What shall I do? I'm in for my share of the rations this time, sure."

"Make a clean breast of it," replied Frank. "You will only get yourself in trouble if you do not, for the captain knows exactly how the matter stands."

The mate had already determined to make a full confession; but, nevertheless, his feelings, as

he entered the cabin, were not of the most pleasant nature. His reception, however, was far different from what he had expected. The captain, as we have seen, was one of the most reasonable men in the world, if approached in the proper manner, and if he saw that an officer endeavored to do his duty, he was very patient with him; if he found that a reprimand was necessary, it was administered in the most friendly manner; but if he once took it into his head that an officer had willfully, or through negligence, omitted a portion of his duty, then, as the ship's company used to remark, it was "stand from under." Mr. Keys was a great favorite with the captain, as he was with all his brother officers, who admired his dashing style and his good-natured disposition. He was never idle, but was always hurrying about the ship, as if the well-being of every person on board depended upon himself, and, as a consequence, his duty was always done, and the deck of which he had charge was kept in the nicest order.

As he entered the cabin the captain greeted him with a smile. Pointing to a chair, he inquired, as he commenced turning over the leaves of the memorandum-book:

"Mr. Keys, is this some of your work?"

"Yes, sir," answered the mate.

"Well, what in the world possessed you to hoodwink Mr. French in this manner?"

"Because, sir, he has often informed me, when I have undertaken to instruct him, that he wishes to learn every thing by experience, sir. I have been assisting him."

"Do you think he has improved any with your help?"

"Yes, sir; he has learned that his authority in the mess-room is not equal to that of the caterer."

"Well, I thought you had a hand in that affair," said the captain, "and now I wish to give you a piece of advice. I, myself, have often been in such scrapes as this, and have been brought up with a round turn. This reminds me of a little incident that happened while I was a midshipman on the Colorado. The story has grown old by this time, but it will be considered a good one as long as the navy shall exist. There were eight of us in the mess, and while we were lying at the navy-yard we had nothing to do but to play tricks upon each other, and upon every one who came in our way. Our ship was commanded by a commo-

dore who never bothered his head about us so long as we remained within bounds. As is always the case, we abused our privileges, grow's bolder by degrees, until finally the commodore taught us a lesson that we never forgot.

"One pleasant afternoon, as we were lounging about the decks, waiting for something to turn up, we saw a green-looking specimen of humanity come over the side, and, in an instant, were on the alert. He, probably, had never been on board of a man-o'-war before, for he stared with open mouth at every thing he saw. Here was a chance for us, and as soon as the officer of the deck had walked aft, out of sight, we collared the countryman, and led him back to our mess-room.

"'By gum, but you have got every thing nice here,' said he. 'I'd like this better than workin' on a farm.'

"'Ah, you ought to go up in the commodore's cabin if you want to see something nice,' said a midshipman, who was our leader in all sorts of mischief. 'But, look here, my friend, if you wish to remain with us, you must have on a uniform. No civilians are allowed to stay here.'

"We all took this as a hint, and commenced

rigging the Yankee out in our clothes. One furnished him with a coat, another a pair of pants, another a cap, and I gave him a sword that had just been presented to me.

“‘Now,’ said our leader, ‘do you want a good dinner—one of the very best?’

“‘Sartin,’ replied the countryman. ‘Got any?’

“‘No; but the commodore has, and it is just about his dinner time.’

“We then explained to him that he must go up to the cabin and tell the commodore that he had just been ordered to the ship; and, in accordance with his usual custom, the old gentleman would be certain to invite him to dinner.

“‘He is very cross sometimes,’ said we, ‘but don’t be at all afraid of him—he does n’t mean any thing. Talk to him as though he was your father.’

“‘By gum, I kin do that,’ said the Yankee, and off he walked, while we took up a position where we could hear and see all that passed.

“The commodore was seated at his desk, writing, and the countryman at once walked up to him, slapped him familiarly on the shoulder, and shouted:

“‘Hullo, ole hoss! how de do? Shake hands with a feller, won’t ye?’

“The commodore looked up in surprise, and ejaculated:

“‘Eh! What do you want here? Get out of this. Away you go.’

“‘O no, ole hoss, not by a long shot,’ replied the Yankee, coolly seating himself in the nearest chair. ‘Them ar young fellers down stairs told me to come up here and git some dinner; and, by gravy, I ain’t goin’ till I git it; so fetch it on.’

“Of course, it was as plain as daylight to the commodore that we were at the bottom of the whole affair, for the countryman never would have had the audacity to act in such a manner, unless some one had put him up to it, and he determined to punish us in a manner that we had not thought of.’

“‘Look here, my man,’ said he, ‘do you see that soldier out there?’ pointing to a marine that was pacing back and forth before the gangway. ‘Well, he has got a loaded musket, and unless you get off this ship instantly, he will shoot you. Now, away you go, you land-lubber, and don’t stop to talk to any body.’

“We saw our victim moving off, and were convulsed with laughter at what we considered to be the best joke we had ever perpetrated. We supposed, of course, that he would return with our clothes, but you can imagine our astonishment when we saw him walk down the gang-plank and out on to the wharf. We held a hurried consultation, and then I started for the cabin, and, making my best bow, asked permission to step ashore for a moment.

“‘No, sir,’ replied the commodore; ‘no shore liberty is to be granted to-day.’

“In short, we all lost our clothing—every thing that we had loaned the countryman—and a more crest-fallen set of midshipmen one never saw. We endeavored to keep the affair a secret, but the commodore told it to the first lieutenant, and from him it soon spread, until the entire ship’s company were acquainted with the particulars. We were very careful after that, and never undertook to play any more jokes on the commodore. There are many things objectionable in this custom—for I can call it nothing else—which is so general among young officers, of playing off tricks upon each other; and your jokes are getting a

little too practical. If you must indulge in them, I wish you would endeavor to keep them out of the cabin, for I don't like to be bothered. That will do, sir."

Mr. Keys retired, highly pleased with the result of his interview with the captain, and went straight to Frank, to whom he related every thing, and showed him the sham "regulation" in his memorandum-book, which had been the cause of so much merriment.

Mr. French was soon afterward seen to emerge from the cabin, where he had listened to a lengthy lecture, containing advice which, if followed, would in future prevent all difficulty. Of course, all the officers were soon made acquainted with the affair, and many were the inquiries, in Mr. French's hearing, as to what kind of an apology the captain had made. It is needless to say that he was fully convinced that "experience is a hard task-master," and that it is well enough, especially on shipboard, to take advice.

A few days after the events which we have just been relating transpired, the Ticonderoga arrived at Yazoo River. In obedience to his orders, Frank reported on board the flag-ship.

Owing to a press of business, it was nearly a week before the court of inquiry was convened. Scarcely an hour was passed in the examination of the witnesses, during which time the main facts of the case were developed, Frank completely vindicated, and Mr. Howe, who had reported him, was sent on board of ship in disgrace. The same evening the former received his promotion as acting ensign, accompanied by orders to report on board of the Trenton for duty.

"I am very glad, for your sake, Mr. Nelson," said the captain, "to be able to give you this promotion, but very sorry for my own. I regret exceedingly that you are detached from this vessel, but it is something over which I have no control. I am perfectly satisfied with your conduct since you have been with me. If you will attend to your duties in future as well as you have since you have been here, I will answer for your rapid advancement."

CHAPTER X.

New Messmates.

THE next morning, immediately after quarters, the second cutter was called away; and Frank, after seeing his luggage safely stowed away in her, shook hands with his brother officers, who had gathered on the quarter-deck to see him off, and started toward

his new vessel.

The cutter had made, perhaps, a dozen yards from the Ticonderoga, when Frank observed a commotion among the crew assembled on the main-deck, and the old mate, mounting one of the boat-davits, shouted:

“Three cheers for Mr. Nelson!”

The cheers were given with a will, and Frank answered them by taking off his cap. It was one of the happiest moments of his life. He knew

that while attached to the Ticonderoga he had endeavored to do his whole duty. The shoulder-straps which he wore showed that his services had been appreciated by the captain, and the hearty expression of good feeling which had just been exhibited by the men, afforded abundant proof that he had left no enemies among them.

When he arrived alongside of the Rover, he found the officer of the deck, boatswain's mate, and side-boys standing on the after-guard, and Frank was "piped over the side" with all the ceremony due his rank. It made him feel a little embarrassed at first, for never before had so much respect been shown him. But he knew that he had won the uniform he wore by hard knocks, and was more entitled to this honor than those who sported ensign's shoulder-straps which had been obtained, not by any skill or bravery of their own, but by the influence of friends at home.

Frank made known his business, and was immediately shown down into the cabin. The captain, who had often met him on board of the Ticonderoga, and who had heard of his exploits, greeted him cordially, and was glad to learn that he had received such an acquisition to his crew.

When he had indorsed Frank's orders, he sent for the chief engineer, to whom he introduced him, with a request that he might be made acquainted with the other officers of his mess; after which Frank was shown to his room, whither his luggage was soon conveyed.

Just before supper he was introduced to the officers belonging to the ward-room mess; but when he had seated himself at the table, and listened a few moments to the conversation that followed, he found that some of his new messmates went by names very different from those by which they had been introduced. One of the ensigns, whose name was Andrews, was known as Count Timbertoes, from the very dignified manner in which he always conducted himself, and from his wooden-leg style of progression.

The executive officer, whose name was Short, answered to its opposite—Long; and sometimes, behind his back, he was called "Windy." Frank was not long in discovering why it was that such a name had been given him, for he was certainly the most talkative man he had ever met; and when asked the most simple question, instead of answering it by a plain Yes or No, he would "beat

about the bush," and deliver a regular oration on the subject. He had a great command of language, and seemed desirous of making every one whom he met acquainted with the fact.

The paymaster went by the name of Young Methuselah. He was a man about twenty-seven years of age, but the account kept by one of the engineers, who messed in the steerage, made him about two hundred and eighty years old. There was scarcely a trade or profession in the world that, according to his own account, he had not followed for five or ten years. He had been a shoemaker, a painter, a grocer, a horse-jockey, and an editor; had practiced medicine, traveled in Europe, and, when a mere boy, had been master of as fine a vessel as ever sailed out of Boston. He was a "self-made man," he said, and early in life had started out with the intention of seeing the world. This was the reason he gave for following so many different occupations.

Unlike the rest of the officers, he disliked very much the name they had given him, and had often complained to the caterer of the mess, and finally to the captain. The former took no measures to correct it, and the latter "didn't want to be

troubled with mess affairs," and so the paymaster was compelled to bear his troubles, which he did with a very bad grace, that only made matters tenfold worse. It was a noticeable fact, however, that, whenever any of the officers were in need of money, he was always addressed as *Mr. Harris*, but as soon as the money had been obtained, or the safe was empty, he was plain Methuselah again.

The chief-engineer's name was Cobbs, but he went by the name of Gentleman Cobbs, from the fact that he was always dressed in the height of fashion, sported his gold-headed cane and patent-leather boots about decks, and had never been known to "do a stitch of work" since he had been on board the vessel.

These names were, of course, applied only in the mess-room, for the captain was a regular naval officer, a very strict disciplinarian, and any such familiarity on deck would have brought certain and speedy punishment on the offender. On the whole, Frank was very well pleased with his new messmates; they seemed to be a set of generous, good-natured men, and, aside from the grumbling of the paymaster, which was kept up

without intermission from morning until night, but which received no attention from the other members of the mess, every thing passed off smoothly. The ward-room was kept scrupulously clean and neat, and the manner in which all the delicacies of the season were served up bore testimony to the fact that, although Gentleman Cobbs was very much averse to work, he well understood the business of catering, and was fond of good living.

After dinner, the officers belonging to both the steerage and ward-room messes congregated on the main-deck, under the awning, to smoke. During the conversation the carpenter, who went by the name of "Chips," remarked, as he wiped the big drops of perspiration from his forehead :

"This boat is intolerable. I would like to be where I was six years ago this summer."

"Where was that?"

"I was in a whale-ship, off the coast of Greenland. I was tired enough of it then, but now I'd like to have just one breath of air off those icebergs."

"So would I," said the paymaster. "It would be so refreshing."

At this, a little, dumpy man, who had sat lolling

back in his chair, with his hat pushed down over his eyes, and his cigar, which he had allowed to go out, pointing upward toward his left cheek, started up, and carelessly inquired:

“Were you ever there, sir?”

“Yes, when I was a youngster. I went up there just to see the country. I spent five years on the voyage.”

The dumpy man made no answer, but there was a roguish twinkle in his eye, as he drew a little memorandum-book from his pocket, and, after deliberately placing it on his knee, proceeded to make the following entry, on a page which was headed “Chronological Tables,” and which was covered on one side with writing, and on the other by a long column of figures:

Paymaster spent on voyage to Greenland.....5 years.

After adding up the column of figures, he closed the book and returned it to his pocket. Then, turning to the paymaster, he quietly remarked:

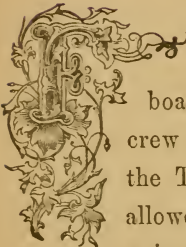
“Four hundred and eighty-five years old! That’s doing well—extremely well. You don’t look as old as that, sir. You won’t find one man in five hundred hold his age as well as you do.”

The effect of this speech on the officers sitting around was ludicrous in the extreme, and had the party been in the mess-room the dumpy man might possibly have been obliged to "run a race" with a boot-jack, or any other missile that came handy to the paymaster; but as it was, the latter was compelled to choke down his wrath, and leave the deck.

Frank also found that these strange cognomens were common in the steerage; one, in particular, he noticed. It was a master's mate, who went by the name of "Nuisance." He was as "green" as he could possibly be, and, although he seemed to try hard to learn his duty, was continually getting himself into trouble. He had a room off the quarter-deck, (the same that Frank was to occupy,) but seemed to prefer any other room than his own; for, when off watch, he would take possession of the first bunk that suited his fancy; and, not unfrequently, boots, neck-ties, collars, etc., which had been missed, were found upon his person. It was not his intention to *steal* them, for the articles were always returned after he had worn them to his satisfaction. If an officer went into his room to write, or to engage in any other

business at which he did not wish to be disturbed, the mate was sure to be on hand, and hints were of no avail; nothing but a direct "Clear out—I don't want you in here," would have the desired effect. It was this habit that had given him the name he bore. One would suppose that after receiving so many rebuffs he would cease to trouble his brother officers; but he seemed to be very dull of comprehension. The executive officer scolded him continually. Finding that it did no good, the officers were obliged, as a last resort, to keep their rooms locked. Had the mate been of a surly, unaccommodating disposition, he would not have got off so easily; but no one could have the heart to report him, for every one liked him. He was always cheerful, ready to do any one a favor, and was generous to a fault. Frank at once took a liking to his new room-mate, but, having been duly instructed by the others, he took particular pains to keep all his wearing apparel, when not in use, safely locked in his trunk.

CHAPTER XI.

A Good Night's WorkFRANK'S past history soon became known to every one on board the Trenton, for several of the crew had acquaintances on board of the Ticonderoga, and when they were allowed liberty, had taken pains to inquire into the character of their new officer. He was scarcely allowed time to become settled down in his new quarters, before he was given an opportunity to establish his reputation among his messmates. Information was received that the rebels were intending to cross a large body of cavalry about twenty miles above the Yazoo River, and the Trenton was ordered up the Mississippi to prevent it, if possible.

For several days they patrolled the river near the suspected point, but nothing unusual was

seen; neither could any intelligence of the contemplated move be obtained from the people on shore. There were several houses on the beat, and in one of them lived a Frenchman, who, as he said, having claimed the protection of his own country, was not compelled to bear arms; neither was he at all interested in the war. It was near his house, however, that the crossing of the cavalry was to take place, and the captain of the Trenton thought that this neutral Frenchman would bear watching.

Although there were several white women on the premises, he was the only man who had been seen; and he seemed to be in constant anxiety lest the rebels should confiscate a large drove of cattle he had at a pasture back in the country, and was in the habit of riding out twice each week to "see to them," as he said. There was something suspicious in this, for persons as much in want of provisions as the rebels were reported to be—as they had gathered up all the stock in the country for miles around Vicksburg—would not be likely to respect such property, although it did belong to a neutral.

The captain and his officers mingled freely with

the people, who appeared to be eager to communicate all the plans of the rebels with which they had become acquainted. Frank, as usual, was on the watch; and if he sometimes paid a visit to the house, he was more frequently seen questioning the negroes—of whom there were about half a dozen on the plantation, the others having been compelled to leave their master to work on the fortifications—who were either profoundly ignorant of what was going on, or else were true rebels. There was one negro, in particular, in whom the young officer was interested. He was a tall, muscular fellow, black as midnight, about whom there was a kind of sneaking, hang-dog look that Frank did not like. He always accompanied his master on his trips to attend his cattle, and Frank felt confident that if any one about the plantation knew of any thing suspicious going on, it was this negro; but, in spite of his efforts, he could not find an opportunity to talk with him, for the negro was generally in the company of his master, and, when alone, seemed to take particular pains to avoid the young officer. This was enough to arouse his suspicions, and he determined to watch him closely. He reported

the matter to the captain, who readily granted his request that he might be allowed to spend his time, when off watch, on shore.

A week passed, but nothing had been developed. At length, one morning the Frenchman prepared to pay his usual visit to the country. The negro was to accompany him, and as Frank saw them about to move off, he inquired, carelessly:

"Haven't you got another horse? If you have, I should like to go with you."

"O, no," answered the man, quickly, "I have no other horse; and if I had, it would n't do for you to go, for you would certainly get captured."

This set Frank to thinking. The Frenchman had often told him that there were no rebels in that section of the country, and now his excuse for not wanting company was that Frank would be captured. There was something suspicious in this. After seeing the man depart, he hailed the ship for a boat, and as soon as he arrived on board, sought an interview with the captain.

"I do not believe, sir," said he, "that this Frenchman owns any stock in the country. It is my opinion that he goes out there to hold com-

munication with the rebels. He's a sort of spy and messenger-boy, and relies on his nationality to protect him from suspicion."

Frank then related the particulars of what had transpired at the house, and the captain readily agreed with him. But the question was, how to proceed, in order to ascertain what was going on, and what kind of information was furnished the rebels. It was impossible to follow the men on their trips without being discovered; neither was it policy to seize the man, accuse him of treachery, and compel him to confess the truth, for the plot, whatever it was, might not be completed, and it might be necessary to keep the Frenchman in ignorance of the fact that his complicity with the rebels had become known, in order that, when the work was completed, it might be finished up entirely.

"Well, to tell the truth," said the captain, rising from his chair and pacing up and down the cabin, "I really don't know how to act. That something is wrong, I have long been satisfied; but I don't know how to go to work to find out what it is."

"I believe I can find it out, sir," said Frank,

who, with his usual promptness, had determined upon a plan. "They will return this afternoon about three o'clock, and, with your permission, I'll see what I can do."

"Very well," replied the captain, in a tone which showed that he did not anticipate his success. "Go ahead; but be careful not to excite their suspicions."

Such a commission as this—something requiring skill and judgment—was just what suited Frank, and, having laid his plans, he felt confident of success. At half-past two a boat was called away, and he, in company with the mate—both armed with revolvers—went on shore. Frank walked up to the house and seated himself on the portico, while the mate, previously instructed, strolled off toward the barn.

There were two officers in the house belonging to the vessel, and Frank had spent but a few moments in conversation with them, when the Frenchman and the negro rode up. The former dismounted and greeted the officers with apparent cordiality, but Frank scarcely noticed him, for his eyes were upon the negro, who rode off toward the barn to put up the horses. Frank arose from

his seat and followed slowly after him. As the officers were accustomed to roam wherever they pleased about the plantation, no notice was taken of his movements. When he reached the barn where the negro was unsaddling the horses, he entered and closed the door behind him. The negro became terrified when he found himself thus confronted, for suspicions that he and his master had been discovered instantly flashed across his mind.

"Ah, I know that you are guilty, you rascal," said Frank, triumphantly, as he noticed the man's trepidation. "Come here; I want to have a few moments' conversation with you on a very important subject. Come here."

The negro dropped the saddle which he had just taken from one of the horses, and stood for a moment undecided how to act; then springing forward like a tiger, he thrust the officer aside, and endeavored to open the door. Quick as thought, Frank grappled with him, but the negro was a most powerful fellow, and would no doubt have succeeded in escaping, had not the mate sprang from a manger, where he had lain concealed, and felled him to the floor with a blow

from the butt of his revolver. For some time he lay insensible, in spite of the buckets of water which were dashed over him; but at length he began to recover. When he was able to sit up, the mate stationed himself at the door to guard against surprise, and Frank proceeded to interrogate the negro.

"In the first place," said he, "I guess you have found that we are in earnest, haven't you?"

The negro felt of his head, but made no reply.

"Now," continued Frank, "unless you answer every question I ask you, I'll take you on board the ship as a prisoner. What do you and your master go out into the country for, twice every week?"

The negro still remained silent, and Frank, finally growing impatient, exclaimed, "Here, Jack, take this scoundrel on board the ship; I guess we can find means to make him open his mouth."

"O, my master will kill me," whimpered the negro, trembling violently. "If I don't tell you every thing, you will kill me; and if I do, my master will kill me, too; so I shall die any way."

"No you won't; just tell me the truth, and I'll see that no one harms you. Your master need

know nothing about it; we shall not be likely to tell him. Now, what is there out in the country that you go to see so often?"

"Torpedoes," replied the negro, in a low voice, gazing about the barn with a frightened air, as if he expected to see his master appear before him in some magical manner.

"Torpedoes!" repeated Frank. "Where are they?"

"In a little creek about six miles from here."

"Who is making them? Are there any rebels there?"

"Yes; there is a colonel, major, and lieutenant there; but my master's black men are doing the work."

By adroit questioning—for the negro was very careful to answer no further than he was asked—Frank finally gleaned the whole particulars. One piece of information troubled him not a little, and that was, an attempt was soon to be made to blow up the Trenton. He also learned the number of the torpedoes, the manner of operating with them, and other particulars that will soon appear. He was then as much puzzled as ever, and paced the floor of the barn, undecided how to act. The time

set for the sinking of the Trenton was Friday night, (it was then Thursday), and as information of her movements was every day conveyed to the rebels, the question was, how to keep them in ignorance that their plot had been discovered, so that the work might be carried on as usual. There was, apparently, but one way, and that was to hold out inducements to the negro.

"See here," Frank suddenly exclaimed, "you are between two fires now."

"I know that," replied the negro, well aware that he was in a most precarious situation; "I know that. But what am I to do?"

"Well, this is what you must do," answered Frank; "go off and attend to your business, just as you did before. Of course you won't be foolish enough to say a word about this meeting to any one around the plantation; but if every thing does not transpire to-morrow night just as you said it would, I shall think that you have been telling some one, and that the plot is discovered, and then you're a goner. But if you will assist me, I will take care of you; I will take you on board the ship, and make a free man of you."

The negro, who had been worked up to the

highest pitch of terror at the turn affairs were taking, brightened up when the words "free man" struck his ear, and Frank, who was a pretty good judge of human nature, could easily read what was passing in his mind, and knew that in the negro he had a faithful coadjutor.

"Now, if you are certain that you understand what I mean," said he, "be off. Go out the back door, so that no one will see you from the house; and remember that your freedom depends upon the manner in which you behave yourself."

The negro arose from the floor, and speedily made his exit. After waiting long enough to allow him to reach the house, Frank and the mate slipped out of the front door. Giving the negro quarters a wide berth, they approached the house in a different direction from that in which they had left it.

The mate had been instructed to keep the affair a profound secret, for, now that they had succeeded in working out so much of the plot, they wished to have the honor of completing it.

After a few moments' conversation with the Frenchman at the house, they repaired on board the vessel.

"I have returned, sir," said Frank, as he entered the cabin.

"So I see," replied the captain, good-humoredly, "and have, I suppose, accomplished nothing."

"No, sir; I can't say that," answered Frank, guardedly. "I *have* accomplished considerable. I know that the Frenchman is a spy; that he has daily communication with the rebels, and that his story of visiting his stock in the country is nonsense. He has about as many cattle there as I have."

"Have you indeed succeeded?" inquired the captain, in surprise.

"Well, no, sir, not entirely," replied Frank, who did not know how much it was best to tell the captain. "I have learned more than that, but it takes time to complete the work. Before I go further, sir, I should like authority to manage the affair myself. After I have gone as far as I have, I should n't like to be superseded."

"That was not my intention. No one shall be placed over you. If you can accomplish any thing more, do it. But what else did you hear?"

Frank then related the result of the interview

between himself and the negro, and then left the cabin, with repeated assurances that his plans for capturing the rebels should not be interfered with.

The next day, it seemed to Frank, moved on laggard wings; but afternoon came at length. He then went on shore, and after having learned from the negro that every thing was working as nicely as could be wished, returned, and commenced making his preparations for the night's work. At eight o'clock he again left the vessel in a small skiff, with two negroes for a crew, and the mate shortly followed in the cutter, with twenty men, all well armed. The former held up the river, and the cutter pulled in an opposite direction. The officers of the ship were, of course, very much surprised at these movements. As they had not been informed of what was going on, they thronged the forward part of the deck, watching the expedition as long as it remained in sight.

The night was dark as pitch, but it could not have been better for their purpose; and Frank was highly delighted at the handsome manner in which all his plans were working, and which promised complete success. He held his course

up the river until he arrived at a small creek whose mouth was almost concealed by thick bushes and trees. He boldly entered this creek, but had not proceeded far when a voice hailed :

"Who comes there?"

"Death to the Yankees," promptly replied Frank.

"Why, you're half an hour ahead of time," said the voice. "Didn't the Yanks see you as you came up?"

"I'll wager a good deal they did," said another voice. "It would be just our luck to have the whole affair knocked in the head. But we'll make the attempt, any way. Come up here."

It was so dark in the creek that Frank could scarcely see his hand before him; but he knew pretty well who it was addressing him. Pulling up the creek, in obedience to the order, he came in sight of a boat lying close to the bank, in the shade of the bushes that hung out over the water. In this boat were seated three men, two of whom were holding in their hands several ropes that led to a dark object that lay in the water astern of the skiff.

"Here's the torpedo," said one of the men, as

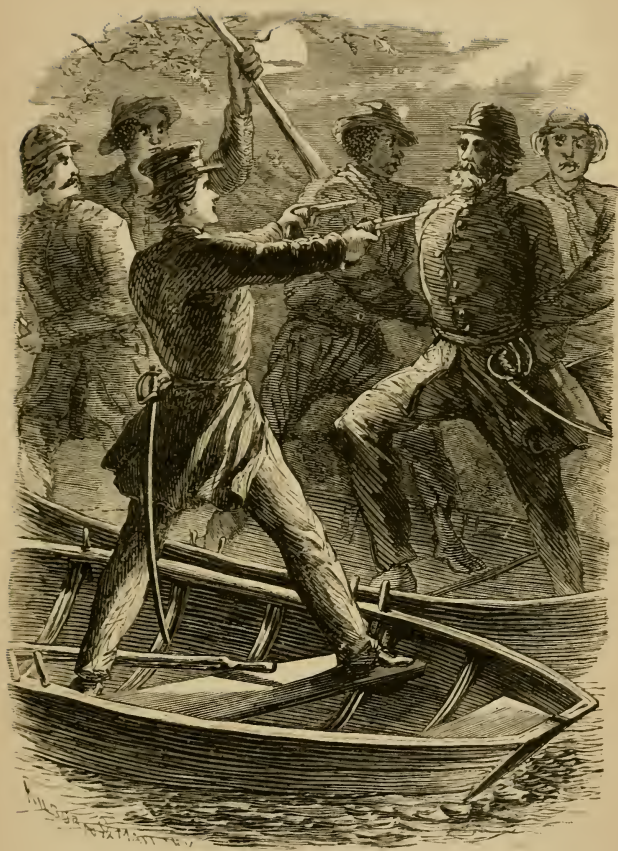
Frank came alongside, and as he spoke he passed the ropes over to the young officer. "Just drop silently down the river as far as you can without being discovered, and then cast off the torpedo, and let it float down on to the Trenton. We'll go up on the bank and watch the experiment."

"Gentlemen," said Frank, suddenly pulling a brace of revolvers from his pocket, "you are my prisoners."

As he spoke, the negroes threw down their oars and sprang into the skiff. Before the rebels could draw a weapon, they were powerless in the strong grasp of Frank's sable coadjutors. The prisoners were the colonel and major of whom the negro at the plantation had spoken. The third person in the boat was one of the Frenchman's slaves, who had rowed the boat down the creek for the rebels. He had jumped to his feet as if about to escape, but had been collared by one of Frank's negroes, and thrown into the bottom of the boat, where the fear of the revolvers kept him quiet.

"What's the meaning of all this?" asked the colonel, as he struggled furiously to free himself.

"It means," replied Frank, coolly, "that you are prisoners in the hands of those you sought to



destroy. So surrender yourselves without any more fuss. Make their hands fast, boys."

The negroes, who seemed to be well prepared, drew from their pockets several pieces of stout cord, with which they proceeded to tie the arms of the rebels, who, finding that escape was impossible, submitted to the operation without any further resistance. As soon as they were secured, Frank made the torpedo fast to the bank, after which he and his men, with the prisoners, disembarked, and commenced marching toward the house. They had proceeded but a short distance when they received a challenge, to which Frank replied, when they were joined by three of the crew, who had been stationed on the bank by the mate, to capture the rebels, in case they should escape from his officer. The prisoners were given into their charge, and Frank continued his march toward the house, congratulating himself that, although his work was but half done, he had succeeded beyond his expectations.

The field about the house was silent as death, but he knew that the mate had neglected none of his instructions, and that trusty men were hidden all around him, ready at any moment to lend

effective assistance. Arriving at the door, he pounded loudly upon it with the butt of his revolver. The summons was answered by the Frenchman, who gazed upon our hero with surprise, not unmingled with a feeling of alarm.

"I'm glad to see you," said Frank. "You're just the chap I want."

The Frenchman comprehended at once that he had been betrayed. Drawing a pistol, he leveled it full at Frank's head, but before he had time to fire, a blow from a saber in the hands of one of the negroes, who had followed close behind Frank, knocked the weapon from his grasp. The next moment the back door of the room was suddenly opened, and the Frenchman was clasped in the sturdy arms of the mate.

"Give him to some of the men, Jack," said Frank, "and then follow me quick, or we may be too late."

The order was obeyed, and the mate, accompanied by the two negroes, followed Frank, who led the way back to the creek where the torpedo had been captured. They were just in the "nick of time," for, as they approached, they distinctly heard a voice inquire:

"Where's the colonel? Here's the torpedo, made fast to the bank. I wonder if there is any thing wrong?"

Frank and the mate at once became more cautious in their movements, but their approach had already been discovered, for the lieutenant called out:

"Who goes there?"

"Yankees," replied Frank, stepping out from the bushes, with a revolver in each hand. "Come out here, and surrender!"

The rebel was taken so completely by surprise that he seemed deprived of all power of action. He could hardly realize that he was a prisoner, until Frank repeated his order in a more decided manner, adding, "I'm a good shot at that distance." The lieutenant evidently did not doubt this, for he arose to his feet, and sprang out upon the bank. The prisoners having now all been secured, Frank collected his men and returned on board his vessel.

We will now pause to explain. Frank, as we have seen, had learned from the negro that one of the torpedoes would be finished by Friday night; that it was to be towed down the creek to

the river by the colonel and major, who were to put it in working order, and deliver it to the lieutenant, who, with two negroes to row his boat, was to leave the plantation at half-past eight o'clock, to note the exact position of the Trenton, so that, after getting the torpedo into position, he could allow it to float down upon the vessel. The Frenchman was to be on board, and, with the assistance of the negroes, was to capture any who might escape the explosion. Frank had laid his plans to capture the lieutenant first; but, through fear of creating a disturbance, or being seen from the house, he had been compelled to abandon the idea, and had started half an hour earlier, that he might secure the lieutenant after the capture of the others had been effected, and before he would have time to discover that any thing was wrong. His plans had all worked so admirably, that he was not a little elated with his success. It was a happy moment for him when he brought his prisoners over the side of the vessel, and conducted them to the quarter-deck, where the captain and all the officers were waiting to receive them. The necessary explanations were soon given, after which the prisoners were ordered

below, and Frank retired to his room, well satisfied with his night's work.

The next morning an expedition went ashore, accompanied by the captain. After destroying the torpedo which had been captured the night before, they were conducted by the negro to the place where several more were in process of completion. These also were demolished. While thus engaged, one of the sentinels, which Frank had posted a short distance up the road, fired his gun, and commenced retreating. Frank at once formed his men in line, in readiness for an attack. Shortly afterward a company of cavalry came galloping around a bend in the road, and fired their carbines at the sentinel, who ran for dear life. They halted, however, on seeing the preparations made to receive them, and the captain, taking advantage of this, ordered Frank to fire. The muskets cracked in rapid succession, and, when the smoke cleared away, the sailors saw several riderless horses galloping about, showing that their fire had been effective.

The rebels scattered in all directions, and, dismounting, concealed themselves behind logs and bushes, and commenced fighting in their regular

Indian fashion. The captain, knowing that such an action would not result advantageously to him, and having accomplished the work for which he had set out, ordered the sailors to fall back slowly. As they obeyed, the rebels commenced pursuing; but the expedition reached the river without the loss of a single man. The officer in command of the vessel, hearing the firing, commenced shelling the woods, and under cover of this fire the sailors reached the ship in safety.

The work which had been assigned the Trenton had not been accomplished, but as the time allotted for her stay had expired, she started the next morning to join the fleet at Yazoo River. The prisoners were delivered over to the commanding naval officer—the admiral being below the batteries—to whom a flattering mention was made of Frank, and the skillful manner in which he had performed his work. The young officer received the assurance that his gallant exploit should not be overlooked.

CHAPTER XII.

In the Trenches.

THE day after their arrival at Yazoo River an officer from the flag-ship came on board. After holding a short consultation with the captain, the order was given to get the ship under way, when, as soon as the anchor was weighed, they steamed down the river.

What could be the meaning of this new move? Were their services needed below Vicksburg, and were they about to imitate the Queen of the West, and run by the batteries in broad daylight? That hardly seemed to be the case, for the men were not called to quarters, and the officers were allowed to remain on deck. Every one was excited, and many were the speculations indulged in as to what was to be the next duty the Trenton would be called on to perform. To the impatient

men, the seven miles that lay between Yazoo River and Vicksburg seemed lengthened into a hundred; but at length they rounded the point above the mouth of the canal, and saw before them the Sebastopol of the Rebellion. It was the first time Frank had ever seen the city, and it was a sight that he would not have missed for a good deal. On the heights above the city, and even in the streets, the little mounds of earth thrown up showed where rebel cannon were mounted, and now and then a puff of smoke would rise from one of these mounds, and a shell would go shrieking toward the solid lines of the besiegers, which now completely inclosed the rebels, while an occasional roar of heavy guns told them that the iron-clads still kept close watch on the movements of the enemy below.

The right of the army rested on the river, above the city, and here the Trenton landed, just out of range of the batteries. Preparations were at once made to move some of the guns on shore. The ones selected were those belonging to Frank's division, and they were to be mounted in the batteries above the city, and about a quarter of a mile from the river. It was something of a

task to move the battery that distance, but Frank and his men worked incessantly, and on the second night the guns were brought to the place where it was proposed to mount them. The sailors, although almost exhausted, at once commenced throwing up a battery; but as soon as the day dawned, a couple of shells, whistling over their heads, admonished them that it was time to cease. After a hearty breakfast on the rations they had brought with them, the men lay down in the trenches, and, wearied with their night's work, slept soundly, in spite of the roar of cannon and the rattling of musketry that had commenced as soon as it became light enough for the combatants to distinguish each other. But life in the trenches was a new thing to Frank, and he walked through the rifle-pits, every-where cordially greeted by the soldiers, who liked the looks of these big guns, with which they knew he had something to do, and who made their boasts that, as soon as the "beauties" were mounted and in position, they would "square accounts" with the rebels. There was one gun in particular that annoyed the soldiers exceedingly, and prevented them from working on the trenches. Every time a

shell flew over their heads, they would exclaim, "Shoot away there, for this is your last day;" and Frank was obliged to promise, over and over again, that his first care should be to dismount that gun.

Frank found that, the further he went, the nearer the rifle-pits approached to the city; and finally he came to a group of soldiers who appeared to be conversing with some invisible persons. As he approached, he heard a voice, which seemed to come from the ground, almost at his side, exclaim:

"I say, Yank, throw over your plug of tobacco, won't you?"

"Can't see it, Johnny," replied one of the soldiers. "You wouldn't throw it back again."

"Yes, I will, honor bright," answered the rebel.

"Why," exclaimed Frank, in surprise, "I didn't know that you had pushed your lines so close to the enemy's works!"

"Yes," said a lieutenant, who at this moment came up, "there's a rebel rifle-pit not four feet from you."

"Here," said a soldier, handing Frank his gun,

"put your cap on this bayonet and hold it up, and you'll soon see how far off they are."

Frank did as the soldier suggested. The moment he raised his cap above the rifle-pit, a bayonet was suddenly thrust out, and when it was drawn in, his cap went with it.

"Now, look at that!" exclaimed Frank. "It's very provoking!"

"Aha, Yank! you're minus that head-piece," shouted a voice, which was followed by a roar of laughter from the rebels, and from all the soldiers in the rifle-pit who had witnessed the performance.

"I'm sorry, sir," said the soldier. "I did not want you to lose your cap." Then, raising his voice, he shouted—"Johnny, throw that cap back here!"

"O, no," answered the rebel; "but I'll trade with you. A fair exchange is no robbery, you know," and as he spoke a hat came sailing through the air, and fell into the rifle-pit. It was a very dilapidated looking affair, bearing unmistakable proofs of long service and hard usage.

"Say, Yank," continued the rebel, "do you see a hole in the crown of that hat?"

"Do you call this thing a hat?" asked Frank,

lifting the article in question on the point of his sword, and holding it up to the view of the soldiers. "It bears about as much resemblance to a hat as it does to a coffee-pot."

"I don't care what you call it," returned the rebel; "I know it has seen two years' hard service. That hole you see in the crown was made by one of your bullets, and my head was in the hat at the time, too."

"Well, throw me my cap," said Frank; "I don't want to trade."

"What will you give?"

"We will return your hat, and give you a big chew of tobacco to boot," said the lieutenant.

"That's a bargain," said the rebel. "Let's have it."

"We are not doing a credit business on this side of the house," answered Frank. "You throw over my cap first."

"You're sure you don't intend to swindle a fellow? Upon your honor, now."

"Try me and see," replied Frank, with a laugh.

"Here you are, then;" and the missing cap was thrown into the rifle-pit, and a soldier restored it to its owner. It was rather the worse for its

short sojourn in the rebel hands, for there was a bayonet hole clear through it.

"Say, you rebel," exclaimed Frank, "why didn't you tell me that you had stuck a bayonet into my cap?"

"Couldn't help it, Yank," was the answer. "Come now, I've filled my part of the contract, so live up to your promise. Remember, you said honor bright."

"Well here's your hat," replied Frank; and he threw the article in question over to its rebel owner.

"And here's your tobacco, Johnny," chimed in a soldier, who cut off a huge piece of the weed, and threw it after the hat."

"Yank, you're a gentleman," said the rebel, speaking in a thick tone, which showed that the much coveted article had already found its way into his mouth. "If I've got any thing you want, just say so, and you can have it; any thing except my weapons."

Frank, who was so much amused at what had just taken place that he laughed until his jaws ached, returned his mutilated cap to his head, and, in company with the lieutenant, continued his

ramble among the rifle-pits, the latter explaining the operations of the siege, and the various incidents that had transpired since it commenced. The rifle-pits, the entire length of General Sherman's command, were close upon those of the rebels, and the soldiers of both sides were compelled to suspend operations almost entirely. If a man raised his head to select a mark for his rifle, he would find a rebel, almost within reach, on the watch for him. The soldiers were very communicative, and all along the line Frank saw groups of men holding conversation with their invisible enemies.

After viewing the works to his satisfaction, Frank accompanied the lieutenant to his quarters—a rude hut, which had been hastily built of logs and branches, situated in a deep hollow, out of reach of the enemy's shells. Here he ate an excellent dinner, and then retraced his steps, through the rifle-pits, back to the place where his battery was to be mounted. Throwing himself upon a blanket, he slept soundly until night.

As soon as it became dark, the work of mounting the guns commenced, and was completed in time to allow the weary men two hours' rest before

daylight. Frank had charge of one of the guns, and an ensign attached to one of the iron-clads commanded the other. The whole was under the command of the captain of the Trenton. As soon as the enemy's lines could be discerned, Frank, in accordance with the promises made the day before, prepared to commence the work of dismounting the battery which had given the soldiers so much trouble. He pointed his gun himself, and gave the order to fire. With the exception of now and then a musket-shot, or the occasional shriek of a shell as it went whistling into the rebel lines, the night had been remarkably quiet, and the roar that followed Frank's order awoke the echoes far and near, causing many a soldier to start from his blanket in alarm. A shell from the other gun quickly followed, and the soldiers, as soon as they learned that the "gun-boat battery" had opened upon the rebel works, broke out into deafening cheers. They had great confidence in the "beauties," as they called the monster guns, for they had often witnessed the effect of their shells, and knew that those who worked them well understood their business. Frank had opened the ball, and in less than half an hour the

firing became general all along the line. The gun against which their fire was directed replied briskly; but after a few rounds the battery got its exact range—an eight-inch shell struck it, and it disappeared from sight. Cheers, or, rather, regular “soldier-yells”—a noise that is different from every other sound, and which can not be uttered except by those who have “served their time” in the army—arose the whole length of the line, as the soldiers witnessed the effect of the shot, and knew that their old enemy would trouble them no more.


In obedience to the captain’s order, the fire of the battery was then directed toward different parts of the rebel works. The “beauties” performed all that the soldiers had expected of them, for they were well handled, and the huge shells always went straight to the mark. At dark the firing ceased, and Frank, tired with his day’s work, ate a hearty supper, and threw himself upon his blanket to obtain a few moments’ rest.

The soldiers from all parts of the line at length began to crowd into the battery, examining every part of the guns, and listening to the explanations given by the old quarter-gunner, who, although

almost tired out, was busy cleaning the guns, and could not think of rest until the battery had been put in readiness for use on the morrow. At length a man approached the spot where Frank was reposing, and, seating himself at his side, commenced an interesting conversation. Frank soon learned that his visitor was one of the most noted scouts in the Union army. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man, straight as an arrow, and evidently possessed a great deal of muscular power. Though ragged and dirty, like his companions, there was something about him that at once attracted Frank. His actions were easy and graceful, and he had an air of refinement, which was observed by every one with whom he came in contact. He was serving as a private in his regiment, and, although frequently urged to accept a command, always declined, for he despised the inactivity of camp life, and delighted in any thing in which there was danger and excitement. It was hinted that he had seen some hard times during his career as a scout. At length, when the conversation began to flag, one of the soldiers asked for a story, and the scout, after lighting his pipe, settled back on his elbow, and began as follows:

CHAPTER XIII.

The Scout's Story.

OYS, the life of a scout is the most fascinating, as well as the most dangerous one that I know of. It is a responsible one, too, for not unfrequently the safety and well-being of the entire army depends upon our reports. If, while we are roaming about the enemy's camp, we are deceived in regard to their numbers and position, and our commanding officer, judging by our reports, thinks himself able to surprise and defeat them, and if, upon making the attack, he finds that he has been misled, we are responsible; at least that is the way I have always looked at the matter; and many a time I have misrepresented cases, and have, no doubt, been the cause of allowing the rebels to escape, when they might easily have been beaten, know-

ing that our hot-headed commander would order an attack, no matter how small the chance for success might be.

“Just before we started on the campaign that resulted in the capture of Fort Donelson, I was detailed to scout for head-quarters; and one day while lying in my tent, heartily wishing that a move would be made which would put an end to the lazy life I was compelled to lead, one of the general's staff-officers entered, accompanied by a youth, whom he introduced to me as Mr. Henderson, and informed me that he was to be my ‘partner.’

“‘He my partner!’ I ejaculated. ‘Is he a scout? What does he know about soldiering?’

“The new-comer was rather below the medium height, very slimly built, with soft, white hands, that looked as though they had never been accustomed to hard work, and a smooth, beardless face. He seemed very much out of place among our rough soldiers.

“‘I don't know much about scouting, that's a fact,’ said he, with a laugh. ‘But I know every inch of the country, and can use a rifle. I have been knocked about considerably since the war

commenced, and my father was hanged in Tennessee for being a Union man, and I suffered all sorts of hardships before I succeeded in making my escape.'

"The officer left us together, and, in spite of the chagrin I felt that a mere stripling had been sent to me for an associate, I was soon deeply interested in him, for with his almost childlike simplicity there was mingled an air of confidence in his own powers which drew me irresistibly toward him. He told me his history, and when he dwelt on the cruelty with which the rebels had treated Union men in Tennessee, and related, in a subdued voice, the particulars of his father's death, his slight frame quivered with excitement, and his fingers twitched convulsively, as if he felt the perpetrators of the deed in his grasp. He seemed to have the real grit in him, and I finally came to the conclusion that I had mistaken my man. I soon learned it was so, for, the very first time we got on a scout together, I found that he was made of the right stuff, and I began to have a great deal of confidence in my youthful companion. I don't believe he knew what fear was. He was a splendid shot and an excellent

rider; in fact, he seemed to be out of his element unless he was in the saddle.

“The first time that Sam (for that was my companion’s name) had a chance to show his qualities was after the battle of Pittsburg Landing. One night, just after dark, we set out on horseback to watch the movements of the enemy. We were dressed in our rebel uniform, and provided with passes which would carry us through our lines. The night was dark and cloudy, but Sam, who knew the road like a book, took the lead. We had proceeded in this manner about four miles, scarcely saying a word to each other, when suddenly, as we came around a bend in the road, we found ourselves close upon a picket station. Several men were lying around a fire, eating their supper; and the reason why we had not discovered them sooner was on account of the thick trees and bushes, which completely concealed the glare of the fire from any one coming down the road. How we had succeeded in passing the sentries, which were posted some distance from the station, is still a mystery to me. Either our advance had been so still that they had not heard us, or else the sentries were asleep; at any rate,

we were in the enemy's lines before we knew it, and in something of a scrape. If we undertook to retreat, besides running the risk of being shot by the men at the fire, we should be obliged to pass the sentries, and we might not succeed, for the clatter of our horses' hoofs would certainly alarm them. The only way was to ride up to the fire and put a bold face on the matter, which we did, the rebels supposing that, as we had passed the sentries, we were all right. They at once took us for some of their scouts, and one of them inquired:

“‘How are the Yanks?’

“‘They're there,’ I replied. ‘And you'll have to haul in these picket posts before long, or I am mistaken.’

“‘How is that sentry out there?’ asked the lieutenant in command.

“‘O, he's all right,’ I answered, and seating myself at the fire, began to pitch into the eatables. Sam followed my example, and we enjoyed a very good meal, after which we smoked a pipe, and talked with our companions about the probability of soon thrashing the Yankees soundly, and wishing that we were in the Eastern army, that

we might have the honor of carrying the secesh rag into Philadelphia and all the other large cities at the North. We also received some very valuable information in regard to the rebels and their intended movements; and finally, concluding that the general must be looking for us, we bade the pickets good-by, mounted our horses, and galloped down the road toward the rebel camp. As soon as we thought we had gone far enough to deceive the pickets, we turned off from the road and started through the woods, intending to take a wide circuit, pass the pickets, and start back for our own camp. We stumbled about through the woods for nearly an hour, and finally struck a road that appeared to run at right angles with the one we had just left. This we followed at a rapid gallop for about a mile, when Sam pointed out a light that appeared to be shining in the window of a house ahead of us. We at once determined to reconnoiter, and rode slowly forward for that purpose, walking our horses on the grass at the side of the road, so that our advance would be noiseless. We had gone but a short distance when we were halted. To the challenge, 'Who comes there?' Sam replied, 'Scouts,' and throw-

ing me his rein, he swung himself from his saddle, whispering :

“‘Hold on a minute, Bill! Let me manage that fellow;’ and before I could say a word he had disappeared in the darkness.

“Several moments passed, when I again heard his voice, and riding forward, wondering how he had ‘managed’ the sentinel, I was surprised to see him with a musket in his hand, pacing back and forth across the road. I instantly understood what had transpired, and leading the horses cautiously into the bushes at the side of the road, I fastened them there, and then returned to Sam.

“‘I could’nt help it, Bill,’ he whispered, as I came up. ‘I meant to capture him, and compel him to give us some information; but he fought so desperately that I had to settle him to save myself.’

“‘It can’t be helped; such things are not uncommon in war times. Now you play the part of sentry here until some one passes, and you can find out what the countersign is. Then I’ll go up to the house and reconnoiter.’

“I then lay down by the side of the road, and in a few moments Sam whispered :

“‘Bill, I wonder what’s the number of this post?’

“‘I’m sure I don’t know,’ I replied.

“‘Well, how am I going to find out?’ he inquired. ‘If some one should happen to come along without the countersign, and I should want to call the corporal, I would be in a nice fix, wouldn’t I?’

“Sam said this in such a perfectly cool and unconcerned manner, that I could not help admiring him.

“Just then I heard a faint shout:

“‘Twelve o’clock! Number one. All’s well.’

“‘There,’ I whispered; ‘the sentries are passing the call. Now look sharp.’

“The call passed the round of the sentinels, until number eight was called, but a short distance from us. Then came a pause.

“‘Sam, you’re number nine,’ I hurriedly whispered.

“‘Number nine; and all’s well!’ shouted Sam at the top of his lungs. ‘So far, so good,’ he continued, in a low voice. ‘Now I guess we’re all right. Halt!’ he shouted, hearing the sound of horses’ hoofs rapidly advancing. The horse

man at once drew rein, and at Sam's challenge, answered :

“‘Colonel Peckham.’”

“‘Dismount, Colonel Peckham, and give the countersign.’”

“‘Look here, my man, just let me pass, will you? Do n't detain me, for I am on important business, and am in a great hurry.’”

“‘Halt,’ shouted Sam again ; ‘dismount.’”

“‘I tell you I am Colonel Peckham, commanding ——’”

“‘I do n't care what you command. Just climb down off that horse instantly, or I 'll fire on you. You should n't go by me if you were President Davis himself.’”

“The colonel, seeing that entreaty was in vain, reluctantly dismounted and gave the countersign, ‘Virginia.’”

“‘The countersign is correct. Pass, Colonel Peckham,’ said Sam, bringing his musket promptly to a shoulder arms.

“After the rebel had mounted and disappeared, I whispered :

“‘Now, Sam, I'm going up to that house. Keep a sharp look-out.’”

"After shaking his hand I started toward the place where I had seen the light. Walking carelessly up toward a group of soldiers who were lounging about on the ground, I glanced in at the window, and saw several officers seated around a table, apparently engaged in earnest debate. I listened for a few moments to the conversation of the men, and found that I was two miles inside of the rebel lines. This knowledge was something that would not have pleased me had I been alone, for I was wholly unacquainted with the country, but, knowing that I had a friend on whom I could rely, I looked upon it as merely a little difficulty, from which I could extricate myself as soon and as easily as I pleased.

"I lounged about, picking up a good deal of information, until I heard the relief called, and knowing that, unless we beat a hasty retreat, we would be discovered, I hastened back to the place where I had left Sam, and found him industriously pacing his beat. I was about to bring out the horses, when we heard the clatter of hoofs coming up the road from toward the house, and I at once concealed myself. The answer to the challenge was Colonel Pecknam, who was returning to his

command. As he was about to pass, I, thinking that it would not look well to go back to the camp empty-handed, sprang out of my concealment and seized his reins, while Sam, who instantly comprehended what was going on, placed his bayonet against his breast.

“‘What means this?’ asked the colonel.

“‘Do n’t talk so much,’ replied Sam. ‘A blind man could see that you are a prisoner. So hand over your weapons, and do n’t make any fuss.’

“As Sam spoke, he proceeded to ‘sound’ the colonel, and the search resulted in the transfer of two revolvers to his belt. Then, throwing away his musket and cartridge-box, he sprang upon his horse, which I had by this time brought out, and, seizing the colonel’s reins, we started down the road at a full gallop.

“We had proceeded scarcely a quarter of a mile when we heard several musket-shots behind us, and we knew that the relief had found No. 9 post vacant, and were alarming the camp. Sam, still holding fast to the colonel’s horse, at once turned off into the woods, through which we with difficulty worked our way. At length, however, we reached an open field, which we crossed at a


gallop, and, leaping our horses over the fence, found ourselves in the road again. We had struck it just outside of the rebel pickets, who, hearing us gallop away, fired at us; but the bullets all went wide of the mark, and in less than an hour we reached our own camp, and the prisoner was delivered over to the general."

"I could relate many other adventures to you, but, as I have to go on guard at midnight, I must bid you good-night."

So saying, he arose from the ground, where he had been lying, and walked off toward his quarters. One by one the soldiers, who had gathered about to listen to his story, followed his example, and finally Frank and the ensign who had assisted him in managing the battery, were left alone. Although they had been together but two days, they were on excellent terms with each other; and as Frank had learned that his companion had run by the batteries at Vicksburg, he was naturally anxious to hear the details. The ensign, at his urgent solicitation, then told the story of his thrilling adventures, which here follows.

CHAPTER XIV.

Running the Batteries.

N obedience to orders from the admiral," began the ensign, "the Concord, with the iron-clads, commenced making preparations to run the batteries, by greasing the casemates to glance shot, and by protecting the machinery with heavy timbers and bales of hay. When every thing was ready, the long-looked-for signal was made. The vessels took their stations in accordance with a general order that had been issued a few days previous—the Concord, with a coal-barge in tow, being the fourth in advance.

"As soon as the anchors were weighed, all hands were called to quarters, the ports closed, and every light on board the ship, except those in the magazine and shell-rooms, was extinguished. I took my station beside my men, who stood at

their guns as motionless as so many statues, and in that darkness awaited the issue of events, with feelings that can not be described. The moment I had so long been dreading was fast approaching. Would I survive the experiment?

“As soon as the vessels were fairly under way, the engines were stopped, and we drifted along with the current. Not a sound was heard, except the creaking of the wheel as the pilot guided the vessel down stream. I became more and more excited each moment, until finally my suspense seemed greater than I could bear. That awful silence was worse than the fight itself. I became impatient, and strode up and down the deck, anxiously waiting for the first roar of a gun that should announce that our approach had been discovered. How I longed to look out and see what progress we were making! But the ports had been closed, with imperative orders that they must not be opened without the captain’s command, and I was obliged to remain in ignorance of what was going on outside.

“At length, after remaining at our quarters for nearly an hour—to me it seemed an age—the loud roar of a gun burst upon our ears. The

pilot at once rang the bell to 'go ahead strong, and the puffing of the engines told us that we were rapidly nearing the city. Soon, from another direction, came a second report, accompanied by a shell from 'Whistling Dick,' which went directly over our heads, and exploded far behind us. This was followed, not by the report of a single cannon, but by a crash, as if all the artillery of heaven had been let loose at once, and shells and solid shot, with a noise that was almost deafening. It did not seem possible that we could succeed in running by the batteries; besides, I was very much averse to being shut up in that manner, without the privilege of returning shot for shot. The idea of allowing my vessel to be made a target of, when so many brave hearts were waiting impatiently to give as good as they received, did not at all suit me.

"Until we reached the city, the Concord escaped unhurt, and I began to think that our danger was not so great as I had at first supposed, when, just as we arrived opposite the upper batteries, a shot came crashing through the sides of the vessel. The deck was lighted up for an instant with a flash, and the groans and shrieks

that followed told that it had been too well directed. Confined as the men were, in total darkness, where it was impossible for a person to distinguish those who stood next to him, such an occurrence was well calculated to throw them into confusion. I believe that every one on deck was frightened, but the order, 'Stand to your guns, lads!' delivered in a firm voice by the executive officer, at once put an end to the confusion.

"'On deck, there!' came thundering through the trumpet. 'Open the ports, and return their fire!'

"How my heart bounded when I heard that order! And the men, too, anxious to be on more equal terms with the enemy, sprang at the word, the port-shutters flew open with a crash, and the city of Vicksburg burst upon our astonished view.

"The rebels had profited by their experience, and instead of finding the city shrouded in total darkness, as I had expected, a glare equal to the noonday sun lighted up both the river and the city, the latter seeming one blaze of fire. The vessels in advance of us were rapidly answering the fire of the batteries, and the waters of the

river, usually so quiet and smooth, were plowed in every direction by the shrieking, hissing shells. It was a magnificent sight, one upon which I could have gazed with rapture, had I been a disinterested person; but, as it was, I had no time to dwell upon it.

“‘Out with those guns—lively!’ shouted the captain. ‘Give the rascals as good as they send.’”

“For half an hour the fight continued, the rebels sending their shells thick and fast about our devoted vessel, and we directing our fire against the water-batteries, which lined the shore as far as the eye could reach, when suddenly the pilot rung the bell to stop, which was followed by a command shouted down through the trumpet to ‘Back her—quick!’ I scarcely noticed the circumstance, until one of my men exclaimed, in a frightened voice, ‘We are drifting into the bank, sir, right under the batteries!’”

“The appalling fact was too evident. We were fast approaching the shore, and the engines appeared to be working in vain against the strong current. A cry of horror burst from the lips of the men, who deserted their guns, and made a general rush for the after part of the vessel. I

was astounded. Had the Concord been disabled, and was the captain about to run her ashore and surrender? But I was not allowed much time to ask questions. The conduct of the men recalled me to my senses, and, after considerable difficulty, I succeeded in bringing them all back to their quarters.

“‘The vessel must have been surrendered, sir,’ said one of the men.

“‘I can’t help that. I’ve received no orders to cease firing. Let them have it. Powder-boy, bring two eight-inch canister as soon as possible. Run away lively, now.’

“The vessel still continued to approach the bank, and several of the nearest batteries ceased firing, while the rebels, supposing that she was about to surrender, came running down the bank in crowds, calling out:

“‘Have you struck your flag?’


“‘No!’ came the answer, in a clear, ringing voice, which I knew belonged to the captain. ‘That flag floats as long as one plank of this vessel remains above water!’

“This reply was followed by a shell from one of our broadside guns, which burst in the very

midst of a crowd that was preparing to board the vessel the moment we touched the bank; and by this time the Concord began to mind her helm, and commenced moving from the bank. The astonished rebels hastily retreated to the cover of their breastworks, and I succeeded in getting my guns loaded in time to use the canister upon them. The vessel soon got headed down the river again, and at two o'clock in the morning we rounded to, out of reach of the batteries. The passage had been effected without material damage to us, and it was with a light heart that I repeated the order, 'Secure your guns, lads!' The battle was over, and after the decks had been cleared, and the wounded taken care of, the dead were laid out in the engine-room, and covered with the flag in defense of which they had delivered up their lives. The weary sailors then gladly answered to the order, 'All hands stand by your hammocks,' and I retired to my room almost exhausted, but highly elated at our glorious success."

CHAPTER XV.

A Race for the Old Flag.

“HE next day,” continued the ensign, “the squadron again got under way and steamed down the river, and came to anchor above, and almost within range of, the heights of Grand Gulf. A casual observer would hardly have thought that the bluffs which arose so majestically, like grim sentinels watching over the lesser heights around them, were bristling with hostile batteries, ready to dispute the further advance of the Union fleet; for, so carefully had they been concealed, that nothing suspicious could be discovered. But we were not deceived. We knew that the trees which covered the bluffs, and waved so gently back and forth in the breeze, concealed fortifications of the most formidable kind, and that Union blood must be shed

before they could be wrested from the traitorous hands that had constructed them.

“During the week of inactivity that followed, many an impatient eye was directed toward the heights which, now so quiet, were soon to be disturbed by the noise and confusion of battle. At length the flag-ship was seen approaching, and every one was on the alert. Two more days of inactivity passed, however; but on the third morning, just after the crews had finished their breakfast, signal was made to commence the attack. The anchors were weighed, the men called to quarters, and the fleet bore down upon the rebel stronghold, which was soon enveloped in the smoke of battle.

“The Concord led the advance. For two hours the battle raged with great fury on both sides, the rebels stubbornly holding their ground, in spite of the storm of shells that thinned their ranks and tore up the ground about them. During this time the Concord had again become unmanageable, on account of the strong eddies in the river, and had worked into a position scarcely two hundred yards from the batteries, from which she could not be extricated. It was impossible

either to advance or retreat without running into the bank, and if she attempted to round-to, her destruction was certain. Of course, we below, being busy fighting our guns, knew nothing of our danger; but the captain, although as brave a man as ever trod a ship's deck, was not a little dismayed when he found himself in this perilous situation. He did not expect to bring his vessel safely out of the action, but he stood in the pilot-house and issued his orders with as much coolness as though he were going through the regular daily exercise, instead of being under the hottest fire the enemy could rain upon his vessel.

"In the mean time, I had been sending my shells as rapidly as possible toward the rebel gunners, whom I could see moving about in the batteries. Up to this time not one of my men had been injured; but, just as I was in the act of sighting one of my guns, there was a stunning crash, and a vivid light shone for an instant in my eyes, accompanied by a terrific explosion. I saw the air filled with smoke and splinters, heard appalling cries of terror and anguish, and then all was blank. A shell had entered the casemate above the port, killing and wounding several of

my crew, and a piece of heavy timber, which had been detached from the bulk-head by the explosion, struck me on the head, and laid me out senseless on the deck.

“When I was restored to consciousness I was lying on a mattress in the engine-room, and anxious faces were bending over me. I remember of mistaking the doctor and his attendants for the men belonging to my gun’s crew, and imagining myself still in battle, I gave the order to ‘Train that No. 2 gun a little further to the left, and fire;’ then I became insensible again.

“About the middle of the afternoon I awoke from a refreshing slumber, but, of course, could not imagine how I came to be in that situation. I felt of my head, which was covered with bandages, and of my arm, which was done up in a sling, and finally the remembrance of the scenes through which I had passed came back to me like a dream.

“While I was wondering how the fight had terminated, and who had come out victorious, a sailor, who had been appointed to act as my nurse, entered the engine-room, and approached the bed on tip-toe. From him I learned that the Concord

had been under fire for five hours and thirty-five minutes; that we had been only partially successful, not having silenced all the batteries; that the fleet, with the exception of one vessel, which was lying a short distance above the bluff, and occasionally sending a shell into the batteries to prevent the rebels from repairing the damage which they had suffered, were at their old anchorage again; that the Concord had been struck thirty-five times by heavy shot, but, although quite badly cut up, was not permanently injured; and that our vessel would soon be ready for action again, the entire crew being busily engaged in repairing the damages she had sustained.

“My head and arm pained me considerably; but, being under the influence of some powerful medicine which the doctor had administered, I soon fell asleep, from which I was awakened by the rolling of a drum. Hastily starting up, I found the engineers at their stations, and I knew, by the tramping of feet on the deck above me, that the men were hurrying to their quarters. The ‘ruling passion’ was strong with me. I had grown so accustomed to yield prompt obedience to the

call to quarters, that I quite forgot I was wounded. Springing up, I at once pulled on my clothes—an operation which I found rather difficult on account of my wounded arm—seized my sword, which lay at the head of the bed, sprang up the stairs that led to the main-deck, and ran forward to take command of my division. As I passed the door of the dispensatory, I was confronted by the surgeon, who, holding up his hands in dismay, exclaimed:

“‘Mr. Morton! Do you know what you are about? Where are you going?’

“‘Going to quarters, doctor. Didn’t you hear that drum?’

“‘Get below, sir, instantly,’ was the doctor’s answer. ‘Get below! and don’t let me catch you on deck again until I give you permission. Get below, I tell you, sir!’ he continued, in a louder tone, seeing that I hesitated. ‘Haven’t you got sense enough to know that you are dangerously wounded? I am surgeon of this ship, and have authority to enforce my commands.’

“Of this I was well aware, and I was obliged to retrace my steps to the engine-room, where I lay down upon the bed.

“The morning’s fight having convinced the admiral that, although the batteries had been partially silenced, they could not be completely reduced, without the co-operation of the land forces, he returned to his old anchorage, for the purpose of convoying the transports which were to run by the batteries and ferry the troops across the river below. The latter followed close in the wake of the gun-boats, on which the batteries opened quite as briskly as in the morning. The iron-clads replied, and under cover of their fire the transports passed the batteries in safety, after which the gun-boats also ran by, and assisted in carrying the troops across the river. In this fight the Concord was struck but twice, and no one was injured. As soon as she had been brought to an anchor, the doctor entered the engine-room, and, after regarding me for a moment with an expression that I could not understand, said:

“‘You’re a nice one, ain’t you?’

“‘Why, doctor, what’s the matter?’ I asked.

“‘You don’t wish to get well, I guess.’

“‘O, yes, I do! But I am not badly hurt; there was nothing to hinder me from taking my station.’

“‘You will allow me to be the judge of that, if

you please,' returned the doctor. 'But I have got a room fixed up for you on deck. Do you feel able to walk up there?'

"'Certainly. I am not hurt, I tell you, doctor,' I repeated. 'I can outrun, outjump, or outlift you; and yet you take as much care of me as though I was badly wounded.'

"'Well, you've got a big hole in your head anyhow,' said the doctor, as he took my arm, and assisted me up the stairs, in spite of my assertions that I was 'able to walk alone.' 'It's an ugly-looking wound. Just take my advice now; let me put you on the sick-list for a day or two, and you will be all right.'

"'Well, don't keep me on the list any longer than is necessary,' I answered, knowing that I would be compelled to submit to the doctor's requirements, whether I wanted to or not. 'I do detest a life of inactivity. I want to be doing something.'

"I was furnished with a bed in the ward-room, for my own quarters had been almost demolished during the late fights, and during the two days that followed, I passed the time miserably enough. Every able-bodied man on board the ship was en-

gaged in repairing damages, while I, being closely watched by the doctor, was obliged to remain quiet. My wounds troubled me very little. On the third day after the fight, to my immense relief, my name was taken off the sick-list, and I was allowed to return to duty.

“The next morning after this, signal was made from the flag-ship to get under way, and resume the attack upon the batteries at Grand Gulf. As we approached the heights, a column of smoke, which was seen arising over the trees, told us that the rebels had abandoned their fortifications. The gun-boats touched the bank at the foot of the hill at about the same moment; and, as the Concord’s bows touched the shore, the captain thrust his head from the pilot-house, and shouted:

“‘Get ashore there, you sea-cooks! Get ashore there, and hoist the Concord’s flag over that fort on the top of the hill! Off you go—run like quarter horses!’

“The sailors did not need a second bidding, but, leaving their quarters, they made a general rush for the place where the boat-ensigns were stowed, and if one of the men succeeded in securing a flag, he was instantly seized by half a dozen

others, who desperately struggled to wrest it from him, that they might have the honor of planting it upon the rebel heights, while he struggled as furiously to retain it. All discipline was at an end. The sailors, wild with excitement, were struggling and shouting below, while the captain stood on the quarter-deck, almost beside himself, for fear that his men would be behind, for the crews of each vessel were jumping ashore, bearing in their hands the flags which they had determined to plant upon the deserted fortifications.

"I stood at the hatchway, looking down upon the struggling crew beneath, regretting that my wounded arm—which still continued to pain me at intervals—prevented me from entering as a competitor, when I was aroused by:

"‘Mr. Morton! I know you want this, sir.’

"I turned, and found one of the quarter-masters holding out a flag to me.

"‘Certainly I want it,’ I answered. ‘Thank you;’ and seizing the flag, I sprang upon the hammock-nettings. At this moment the doctor discovered me, and shouted:

"‘Mr. Morton, what are you about, sir? Remember, I only put you on light duty. It will

be the death of you, if you attempt to run up that hill."

"But I was excited, and, without waiting to answer, sprang overboard. I was so anxious to be first, that I could not waste time to go below, and leave the ship in a proper manner. The moment I touched the water, I struck out for the shore, and as I clambered up the bank, I found crowds of men from each vessel running at the top of their speed toward the hill, all bent on planting the glorious old flag on the pinnacle, for the possession of which they had fought so long and desperately. But far in advance of all of them I saw one of the engineers of the Concord. I was both pleased and annoyed at this—pleased that the ship to which I belonged should have the honor of hoisting the Stars and Stripes over the rebel stronghold, and annoyed that I could not be the person who was to raise it. But it was not my disposition to be discouraged. As I had few equals in running, I determined to overtake the engineer, and, if possible, to beat him.

"As soon as I reached the top of the bank, I commenced running, and was soon ahead of many of those who were far in advance of me when I

started. The engineer, in the mean time, also proved that he was no mean runner; and the little flag which he carried over his shoulder moved far up the mountain, dancing about among the rocks and bushes like a will-o'-the-wisp, seeming to recede as I advanced. Soon I had passed all of my competitors with the exception of this one, and the race was now between us. Up, up we ran. I soon discovered that I was gaining at every step. Presently I was so close to him that I could hear his quick, heavy breathing. We were rapidly nearing the fort that crowned the crest of the hill, and I redoubled my exertions. The engineer did likewise. It seemed as though the sight of those battered fortifications had infused new life into him, for he ran at a rate that astonished me; and when I reached the top of the hill the little banner had been planted on the breastworks, and my rival lay on the ground, panting and exhausted. Cheers, long and loud, burst from the gallant band standing at the foot of the hill, who had been interested spectators of our movements, and their shouts were answered with redoubled energy by the crew of the Concord, who, in their joy at seeing their own flag

planted on the fort by one of their own officers, forgot all the sacrifices they had made to accomplish that end.

“In a short time the hights were covered with men, who busied themselves in completing the destruction which the rebels had commenced. At dark all returned on board their respective vessels, which moved out into the stream a short distance, and anchored. I paid dearly for my foolishness in jumping overboard, and then running that distance in the hot sun; for two days after that I was confined to my bed, and finally, at the doctor’s suggestion, I was dumped into an ambulance and sent by land to the hospital-ship. I was well again in two weeks, and learning that a naval battery was to be mounted on shore, volunteered to assist in working it, received permission, and am ready to face any new dangers for the sake of the old flag.”

The next day, while Frank and his companion were fighting the battery, the former was surprised by the appearance of a strange officer, who brought orders for him to report on board his vessel without delay. He obeyed the summons,

and found that the Trenton had been ordered up the Yazoo River, and that he had been sent for to take charge of a division whose commanding officer had been sent to the hospital. As soon as he arrived on board, the vessel was got under way, and, in company with the flag-ship and several gun-boats, which they found waiting for them at the mouth of the Yazoo River, they started toward Haines' Bluff. The report was, the attack was to be a 'feigned' one, but Frank thought, from the pounding the Trenton received, that it might as well have been a *real* one.

The fight was continued until dark, when the vessels dropped down out of range of the batteries and anchored.

CHAPTER XVI.

The Rival Sharp-Shooters.

ABOUT half-past four o'clock, on the succeeding morning, just after Frank had come off watch, and was dozing in his berth, he was awakened by a loud crash. Starting up, he discovered his looking-glass in fragments, and the pieces scattered about over the floor. While he was wondering what could have been the cause of the accident, he happened to discover that the bulk-head behind the looking-glass was splintered, which looked very much as though it had been done by a musket-shot; and, at the same instant, he heard a shrill whistle, with which he was perfectly familiar. He also heard a rustling in the bunk above him, and Mr. Williams, his room-mate, sprang suddenly upon the floor, exclaiming:

"My goodness, Mr. Nelson! the rebels are shooting at us."

"I see they are," answered Frank, coolly, as he slowly arose from his berth and commenced drawing on his pants; "just see our looking-glass! But where are you going?" he asked, finding that his room-mate was frantically gathering up his clothing.

"I'm going to get below as soon as I can," was the answer. "Don't you know that this room is n't iron-clad?"

"Yes, I know that. But what's your hurry?"

Mr. Williams did not stop to reply, but, having collected all his clothing, opened the door and sprang out on deck. One bound carried him to the gangway that led to the main-deck, and in a moment more he had disappeared. Frank was laughing heartily at the comical figure his timid room-mate had cut, when another shot came crashing through the bulk-head, and lodged in the mattress in the berth above him, showing how narrow had been Mr. Williams's escape. This made him think that he also had better be getting below. He waited, however, until he was entirely dressed, and then walked slowly out on the

quarter-deck, and took refuge behind the wheel-house, intending to make himself acquainted with the nature of the attack before going below. The officer of the deck and the quarter-master on watch were the only persons in sight, and they, too, were standing behind the wheel-house for protection.

"What seems to be the matter, Mr. Martin? Are we likely to have a brush?"

"O no," answered the latter; "a few rebels have taken possession of the battery from which we drove them yesterday, and are trying to pick some of us off. Did you see 'Nuisance' when he came out of his room? He ran like a streak, but came very near being winged, for a ball struck the deck not six inches from him."

At this moment the captain appeared, and went into the pilot-house, that he might investigate matters without running the risk of being struck by the bullets. He had scarcely closed the door, when a ball carried away the latch. Had he been a moment later, he would certainly have been killed.

"A close shave," said he, with a laugh. Then raising one of the windows of the pilot-house, he shouted, "On deck, there!"

"Ay, ay, sir," answered Mr. Martin.

"Get under cover as quickly as possible; and, Mr. Nelson, see if you can throw a few shells among those fellows, and drive them out of there."

It was not an easy task to get under cover, for, the moment they showed themselves, the bullets whistled about them like hail-stones. But, after dodging from one stanchion to another, using even the sky-lights for concealment, they succeeded in reaching the main-deck, where they were safe. Frank ran into the turret, while Mr. Martin and the quarter-master dived down the hatchway, and ran up into the pilot-house.

"Turn out, you first division, and cast loose that No. 2 gun," shouted Frank, as he reached the gun-deck, where the crew were still sleeping soundly in their hammocks. "Turn out lively, lads."

The men at once sprang out of their comfortable beds, and, as soon as the deck was cleared of the hammocks, the gun was cast loose. A moment afterward, a hundred-pound shot plunged into the battery, raising a cloud of dust; but the rebels had seen the flash of the gun in time to throw themselves behind the embankment and escape.

“On deck, there,” shouted the captain, through the trumpet. “That was very well done. Try them again, and fire a little higher, and a trifle further to the left.”

“Very good, sir,” shouted Frank, in reply; and the gun was again pointed, and another breach was made in the battery, but a loud, derisive shout was sent back in reply, showing that the shot had been without effect.

For nearly an hour the fight was kept up, Frank using his gun as rapidly as possible, and the rebels replying with their bullets, which rattled harmlessly against the Trenton’s iron mail, until the captain, finding that it was impossible to dislodge them, gave the order to cease firing.

As soon as Frank had seen the gun secured, he left the deck and went into the ward-room. It was filled with officers, who had been awakened by the firing, and were engaged in an animated conversation on the probabilities of having breakfast.

“If the rebels continue to shoot at us, I don’t know what you can do, gentlemen,” said the caterer. “You know that the galley is on deck, and I can’t send the cook up there, where he will be in danger of his life. When you get hungry you

will find plenty of hard-tack and pickles in the paymaster's store-rooms."

"O no," said the executive officer, "I am not going without my breakfast. There's no danger."

"If you will go on deck, and remain there five minutes," said the caterer, "I'll agree to cook some breakfast for you."

The proposition was accepted by the executive officer, and the two men went on deck, and walked toward the galley. They reached it in safety, when the executive said, triumphantly:

"What do you think now? I told you there was no danger."

A loud crash cut short his words, and a bullet entered the galley, and glancing from the stove, struck the opposite bulk-head, where it remained firmly imbedded in the wood.

"That will do, I guess," said the executive, hastily retreating toward the hatchway. "You needn't mind about sending the boys up here to cook breakfast."

The two officers made the best of their way back to the ward-room, where they enjoyed a very good meal on some provisions that had been brought up out of the paymaster's store-rooms.

They then went into the pilot-house to watch the movements of the rebels in the battery. The latter, finding that their fire was no longer returned, took no precautions to conceal themselves, but arose to their full height when they fired their muskets, and even stood on the battery, waving their hats, as if inviting a shot. Frank watched them until he could stand it no longer, and then ran down below, to ask the captain's permission to return the fire.

"Look out there!" exclaimed that gentleman, as Frank entered the cabin. "The first thing you know"——

He was interrupted by the report of a musket, so loud that it seemed scarcely a stone's throw distant. A bullet came whistling into one of the ports, barely missing Frank, and lodged in the captain's pantry, where a crashing among the crockery told that the ball had not been altogether thrown away. Another shot followed close after it, but Frank had dodged behind the bulk-head, and was safe.

The captain was emphatically in a state of siege. His cabin was in the extreme after-part of the vessel, and in it were two port-holes, which

were open. Two sharp-shooters had taken up a position on the bank, where they could see into the cabin, and had compelled the captain to leave the desk where he had been writing, and take refuge behind the bulk-head. He was taking matters very coolly, however, being stretched out on a sofa, engaged in reading a newspaper.

"Mr. Nelson," said he, with a laugh, "if many more of you officers enter this cabin, I shall be a ruined man. Every shot that comes in here goes slap into that pantry, and I don't suppose I have a whole piece of crockery left. What did you wish?"

"I came, sir, to ask permission to take one of your Spencer rifles," answered Frank. "I believe I can drive those rascals away from there," he added, glancing through the port.

"Very well, you may try. But I don't bother my head about them. They can't shoot through this bulk-head, that's certain. However, it makes me feel rather uncomfortable to know that I can't get out of here without running the risk of being shot;" and the captain stretched himself on the sofa again, and resumed his reading.

After considerable dodging, during which two

more bullets were lodged in the captain's pantry, to the no small disgust of that gentleman, Frank succeeded in securing a rifle and cartridge-box from one of the racks in the cabin, and concealing himself behind the bulk-head, thrust his gun carefully out of the port, and waited for a shot.

The bank was scarcely fifty feet distant, but for a long time not a rebel showed himself, and Frank had about come to the conclusion that they had given up the fight, when he noticed a small gully, scarcely a foot wide, that ran down to the water's edge, and in that gully he saw the top of a head, and afterward discerned a pair of eyes that were looking straight into the port. It was a small mark to shoot at, but Frank had killed squirrels at that distance many a time; so, carefully raising his rifle, he took a quick aim, and fired, confident that there was one rebel less in the world. The ball landed in the bank, and raised a cloud of dust that for a moment concealed the effect of the shot; but it had scarcely cleared away, when a puff of smoke arose from the gully, and another bullet whizzed past Frank's head, and landed among the captain's crockery, showing that the rebel still maintained his position. Frank

cautiously looked out, and saw the rebel hastily reloading his gun; but, before he could give him another shot, the deadly rifle was thrust over the bank, in readiness for another trial.

"O, I'm here yet, Yank!" shouted the rebel, as he saw Frank regarding him as if he could scarcely believe his eyes. "I'm here! and you want to keep close, or down comes your meat-house. This 'ere rifle shoots right smart."

As he ceased speaking, Frank again fired at him, but with no better success than before, for the rebel answered the shot, and dodged back into the gully to reload. For two hours this singular contest was maintained, and Frank was both astonished and provoked at his poor workmanship; still he would have continued the fight, had not the rebel coolly announced—"It's grub-time, Yank. We'll try it again this afternoon."

The fellow's impudence was a source of a great deal of merriment on the part of the captain, who laughed heartily at his remarks, and forgot the loss he had sustained in his crockery.

"Captain," said Frank, as soon as he was certain that the rebel had gone, "it's a good time to close those ports now."

“Don’t go near them. I won’t trust the villains. Tell the officers that they are at liberty to return the fire, but that they must not waste too much ammunition.”

Frank went into the ward-room, and, after delivering the captain’s order, deposited his gun in the corner. While making a hearty dinner on hard-tack and salt pork, he related the incidents of his fight with the rebel, which was listened to with interest by all the officers present. After finishing his meal he went on deck to get a letter which he had commenced writing to his cousin, intending, as soon as the firing recommenced, to renew the battle. Not a shot had been fired since the rebel left the gully, and when Frank walked across the deck and entered his room, not a rebel was in sight. He took the letter from his trunk, and was preparing to return below, when a bullet crashed through the bulk-head, and, striking his wash-bowl, shattered it into fragments. This seemed to be a signal for a renewal of the fight, for the bullets whistled over the ship in a perfect shower. Frank sprang to his feet, and waited rather impatiently for an opportunity to make his way below; but none offered. As he

opened the door of his room, he heard a sharp report, that he could easily distinguish from the rest, accompanied by a familiar whistle, and a bullet, which seemed to come from the stern of the vessel, sped past him, striking the pilot-house, and glancing upward with a loud shriek; at the same instant several more from the battery whistled by, too close for comfort.

It was evident that the rebels had seen him enter his room, and knowing that his only chance for escape was across the deck, had determined to keep him a close prisoner. But why did they not fire through the bulk-head? Perhaps they thought that it, like the rest of the ship, was iron-clad, and preferred waiting for him to come out, rather than to waste their lead. But Frank, who knew that the sides of his room were only thin boards, which could afford him no protection whatever from the bullets of his enemies, was not blessed with the most comfortable thoughts. To go out was almost certain death, for, although he might escape the bullets of the rebels in the battery, there was his rival of the morning in the gully, who handled his rifle with remarkable skill. To remain was hardly less dangerous, for a bullet

might at any time enter his room and put an end to his existence.

“Well, I’m in a nice fix,” he soliloquized; “I’ve often heard of treeing bears, raccoons, and other animals, but I never before heard of an officer being treed in his own room, and on board his own ship. I don’t like to go out on deck, and have those bullets whizzing by my head and calling me ‘cousin;’ besides, I shall certainly be shot, for there’s that fellow in the gully, and I know he’s an excellent marksman. I’ve got to stay here for awhile, that’s evident. If I ever get out, I’ll make somebody sweat for this. I wish I had my gun; but, as I am here unarmed, I must find some kind of a protection.” So saying, he snatched the mattresses from the beds, and, lying on the floor, placed one on each side of him as a barricade. He remained in this position until almost night, the bullets all the while shrieking over the deck, and making music most unpleasant to his ears. At length the firing began to slacken, and Frank determined to make another effort to get below. It was not a long distance to the gangway that led to the main-deck, but there was that fellow in the gully who still

maintained the fight, as an occasional crash in the pantry proved, and Frank had a wholesome fear of him. He resolved, however, to make the attempt, and, waiting until the rebel had fired his gun, he threw open the door, when a few hasty steps carried him below. He heard a loud shout as he ran, and knew that the rebel had seen him.

At dark the firing ceased altogether; and after supper—the only cooked meal they had had during the day—the officers assembled on deck to enjoy the cool breeze, for the heat below had been almost intolerable. It was late when they retired, but it is needless to say that those who had rooms on the quarter-deck slept in the mess-rooms.

The next morning, just as every one had expected, the firing was again renewed by the rebels in the battery, and it was at once answered by some of the younger officers of the ship, who cracked away, whether an enemy was in sight or not. Frank had not been able to get the thought of that rebel sharp-shooter out of his mind. The audacity he had displayed in taking up a position so close to the vessel, and the skill with which he handled his rifle, excited his admiration, and he determined that, should he again take up the same

position, he would renew his attempt to dislodge him. He, however, took no part in the fight until he came off watch at noon. He then provided himself with a rifle, and, after considerable trouble, succeeded in getting into the wheel-house, the lower part of which, being built of thick timbers, would easily resist a bullet, and here he settled down, determined to fight his enemy as long as he had a charge of powder left.

The rebel was in his old position, concealed as usual, and, as the cabin ports had been closed, he was directing his fire toward the pilot-house. He was, of course, not aware that Frank had changed his base of operations; but he did not long remain ignorant of the fact, for the latter commenced the fight without ceremony.


As nearly every officer on board the vessel was engaged in fighting the rebels, the one in question could not determine whence the shot came. He drew back for a moment, and then thrust his head carefully out, to reconnoiter. Frank, who could fire seven shots without stopping to reload, was ready for him, and another bullet sped toward the mark, but, as usual, with no more effect than throwing up a cloud of dust.

This time, however, the rebel saw where it came from, and a moment afterward a ball was buried in the thick timbers, scarcely an inch from the place where Frank was cautiously looking out, watching the motions of his rival.

From his new position, Frank found that the rebel, after he had fired his gun, was obliged to turn over on his back to reload, and he determined that, if he could not dislodge him, he would at least put it out of his power to do any further mischief. So, when the rebel exposed his arm, as he was in the act of ramming down the charge, he fired at him again. The latter, ignorant of the fact that his opponent had a seven-shooter, now redoubled his efforts, and made all haste to reload his gun; but again did a bullet strike in the bank close beside him, and cover him with a shower of dust. This seemed to puzzle the rebel, for he raised his head and gazed intently toward the place where his enemy was concealed. That move was fatal to him. Scarcely three inches of his head was exposed; but the bullet went straight to the mark—the rebel rolled down the bank, and the deadly rifle fell from his hands.

CHAPTER XVII.

The Smugglers' Cave--Conclusion.



“FOM,” said Frank, addressing himself to the quarter-master, as the two were standing their watch that evening, “how came you to go to sea?”

“I was born a sailor, sir,” answered the man. “My father, and my grandfather before him, followed the sea for a livelihood. They were smugglers, living among the rocks and crags on the southern coast of England.

“My home was not such a one as would have suited you, sir; but it was a pleasant place to me, and I often look back to the days of my boyhood, although passed amid scenes of danger, as the happiest ones of my life. Our house, as we called it, was a cave in the side of a high mountain, at the foot of which was a long, narrow, and

rocky passage, that led to the ocean. At the end of this passage, next to the mountain, was a small but deep bay, where a vessel could ride at anchor in safety without being seen by any one outside. In front of the cave was a small grass plat, which overlooked a vast extent of sea and land, and from which the distant shores of France could be seen. This was my post, where I sat many a night, watching for the return of my father, who was the captain of the smugglers. It was my business to watch for revenue-cutters, and to give the signal of danger in case any appeared off the coast at the time father was expected to return.

“It would have been a lonely watch in that cave for one who was not accustomed to it, for I never had a companion ; but, having been brought up to that kind of a life, I was never at a loss to know how to pass away the time. The fishing in the basin was excellent, and I had a small boat, the exact model of my father’s little schooner, with which I sometimes amused myself for hours together in running in and out of the channel, which, owing to its rocky nature, was very difficult of passage. It was here that the cutters were always

given the slip. Father never approached the coast except during the night, and many a time have I seen the swift little schooner come bounding over the waves, with every stitch of her canvas stretched, followed close in her wake by a cutter. The latter would be certain of his prize when he saw the schooner heading straight toward the rocks; but, the first thing he knew, the smuggler would be out of sight in the channel. No light was necessary, for father knew every inch of the ground, and before the man-o'-war could lower his boats and discover the place where his prize had so mysteriously disappeared, father would have his goods landed, and, ere the cutter was aware of it, he would run out of the channel under his very nose, and make all sail for France. No one outside of the band was ever known to enter the channel; for, even in broad daylight, a person would have declined making the trial, as the waves dashed and roared among the rocks in a manner that seemed to threaten destruction to any thing that came within their reach.

“The schooner was several times overhauled and boarded while at sea, but father never lost a cargo. He always succeeded in fooling the reve-

nue chaps in some manner. I remember one time in particular, when I made a trip on board the schooner as mate. We made the run in our usual time, easily eluding the cutters that were watching us, and arrived off the coast of France with every thing in order. One dark night we landed our goods, and, after receiving our money, we ran down to a little town, to purchase some necessary articles, and to take in our return supply. A lot of jabbering French policemen sprang on board of us, almost before we had touched the wharf, and commenced rummaging the hold; but they, of course, went away disappointed in their hopes of finding something to condemn us. We lay in port alongside of a little Dutch trading vessel, that was our exact model and build in every particular, until night, when we received our goods, ran by the police, and stood out to sea. We got along nicely until just before daylight, when an 'Irishman's hurricane,' as we call a calm, set in, accompanied by a heavy fog, and we lay motionless on the water, with the sails flapping idly against the masts. It was provoking, and a more uneasy set of men than that schooner's crew I never saw. We remained becalmed for nearly an hour, anx-

iously waiting for the wind to spring up, when I happened to step for'ard, and heard a noise like the washing of the waves against the side of a vessel. I hastily ran aft and reported the matter to father, who silently stationed his men, and walked for'ard, with his speaking-trumpet in his hand, while we stood at our posts, almost fearing to breathe, lest it should be heard on board of the strange vessel, which was still concealed from our view by the thick fog.

“At length, to our inexpressible relief, we felt a puff of wind; then came another and another, each one increasing in force, until the sails began to draw, and the schooner commenced moving slowly through the water. We stood off on the starboard tack, intending to give our invisible neighbor a wide berth; but he had also caught the wind, and we could hear him moving along almost in front of us. At length the fog lifted a little, and we saw a large revenue-cutter standing directly across our bows, scarcely a cable's length distant. We luffed, to allow him to pass, when a hail came from his deck:

“‘Schooner ahoy!’

“‘Yah,’ shouted father through his trumpet.

“‘What schooner is that?’

“‘Dis? Dis is my schooner. You know it.’

“We all held our breath in suspense, wondering what would be the result of this strange answer, when we distinctly heard the voice say:

“‘It’s that rascally Dutchman again.’ Then, in a louder tone, came the question, ‘Did you keep a good look-out for that smuggler, as we requested?’

“‘Yah! But I haven’t saw him.’

“‘O, shiver your ugly figure-head,’ was the answer. ‘I’ve a good notion to put a six-pound shot into you, you wooden-headed sour-kROUT eater. This makes twice that we have been fooled by you. Now off you go, and don’t you cross our hawse again.’

“Father made no reply, and the cutter put her helm down, and started off. We passed under her stern, and in a few moments she disappeared in the fog. The next night we entered the channel, and landed our goods in safety. We afterward learned that the cutter, which had been closely watching our movements, had boarded the Dutch schooner, (which I have before mentioned, and which sailed about two hours in advance of

us,) and so certain were they that they had at last gobbled the smuggler, that they seized the vessel, and unceremoniously slapped the captain and his crew in double irons. The skipper was so terrified that he forgot his English, and jabbered away in Dutch; and it was not until the ship's papers had been overhauled, that the cutter discovered her mistake. When the revenue fellows ran foul of us, they were again deceived by the resemblance between the two vessels, and the manner in which father had imitated the Dutch skipper's language. About a year after that we had a stopper put on our operations, by one of our own men.

“The cave had two entrances—one by a rope ladder from the basin below, which we could draw up in times of danger, and the other by a path through the mountains, which was known only to a few of the band whom father thought he could trust. But his confidence was abused. There is a black sheep in every flock, and we had one among us—a man who, tempted by the offer of reward that was held out for our apprehension, betrayed us, and broke up our harboring-place.

“It was this man's business to go to Bath, a

small town about two miles from the cave, to dispose of our goods to the merchants in that place, and receive the funds. Young as I was, I almost knew that the fellow would one day get us into trouble. He was a short, powerfully-built man, with a most villainous countenance. He was always silent and morose; could not bear to have you look him in the eye; in short, he was just the man that I would have picked out from among a hundred as a traitor. Father seemed to repose entire confidence in him, and always asked his advice in times of danger; but, as much as I respected his judgment, I could not conquer the feeling with which I had always regarded the man, and I was constantly on the watch.

“One night the schooner sailed as usual, but this man, under pretense of sickness, remained behind, with instructions from father, in case he got better, to go to the village and collect some money due him for goods.

“‘All right,’ answered the mate; ‘I’ll attend to it.’ Then, as soon as father had got out of hearing, he muttered, ‘I’ll collect something for you that you won’t expect.’

“As soon as the schooner had cleared the chan

nel, and was fairly out to sea, the rapidity with which that man got well was astonishing. He staid about the cave all day, scarcely saying a word to me, and at night departed by the secret path for the village. I was very uneasy, for a dread of impending evil constantly pressed upon me, and I determined to watch the path, and be ready for any emergency.

“On the cliff, at the entrance of the channel that led to the bay, was a pile of dry wood, that was to be lighted in case of danger. This I replenished, placing materials for striking a light close at hand, and then returned to the cave to keep watch of the path.

“Two days passed without the occurrence of any thing unusual, and the night came on which the schooner was expected to return. I divided my attention between the secret path and the offing, and at length a blue light, moving up and down in the darkness, told me that the schooner was approaching. I answered the signal, and stood peering through the darkness to get a glimpse of the approaching vessel, when I heard a rustling behind me, and looking down the path I discovered, to my dismay, a party of armed

men approaching, headed by the traitor, who said, in a low voice:

“‘It’s all right now. Catch that brat before he has time to light the signal of danger, and let the schooner once get into the channel, and we have got them fast.’

“The person spoken of as ‘that brat’ was myself, and I knew that the salvation of the schooner depended upon my exertions. In an instant I had determined upon my course, and, springing from the cave, I ran toward the rope ladder that led to the basin below, and commenced descending. A moment afterward the mouth of the cave was filled by the burly form of the traitor, who exclaimed:

“‘There he is—shoot him!’ and, suiting the action to the word, he leveled his pistol and fired. I felt a sharp pain shoot through my shoulder; a faintness seized upon me, and, being unable longer to retain my hold upon the ladder, I disappeared in the basin. My sudden immersion in the cold water revived me, and, being an excellent swimmer, I struck out, intending to climb the cliff on the opposite side, and fire the pile. I exerted myself to the utmost, for I could see by the lights

in the mouth of the cave that the traitor and his men were preparing to follow me ; but, it seemed, in my hurry and excitement, that I scarcely moved through the water. At length, however, I reached the opposite shore, and after climbing the cliff, (which I did with the utmost difficulty, for my wounded arm was hanging almost useless at my side, and I had not stopped to look for the path,) I ran at the top of my speed toward the pile. The schooner having seen my signal, and supposing, of course, that all was right, was still standing toward the mouth of the channel. A moment more, and I would have been too late.

“I had considerable difficulty in finding my flint, and then it seemed impossible to strike a light ; but, just as the foremost of my pursuers reached the top of the cliff, I succeeded in catching a spark ; in a moment more, the whole pile was in a blaze. I could not refrain from giving a shout of triumph as I saw the flames shooting upward toward the sky, lighting up the whole face of the rocks, until every object was as clearly defined as in broad daylight. I heard an exclamation of surprise on board the schooner, followed by a few hastily-spoken orders ; then I knew that I had suc-

ceeded, and the schooner was safe. But I was not a moment too soon, for the little vessel was rapidly nearing the mouth of the channel, and once inclosed by those rocky walls, once under the influence of those waves that dashed so madly over the rocks, retreat would have been impossible.

“I was allowed scarcely a moment to congratulate myself upon my success, for my pursuers, finding themselves foiled, determined to wreak their vengeance upon me. They could plainly see me by the light of the burning pile, and the quick discharge of half a dozen pistols sent the bullets thickly around me. It was death to remain where I was, so, taking a last look at the cave, I threw myself over the cliff, and struck out for the schooner.

“My father, having seen me when I took the leap, laid the schooner to, and lowered a boat to pick me up. I tell you, sir, I was a proud youngster when I stood on that deck, receiving the thanks and the congratulations of those I had saved. I forgot the pain of my wound, and the dangers from which I had escaped, in the joy I experienced at finding myself once more safe among my friends.”

Their watch ending with Tom's interesting reminiscence, they then turned in for the night.

The next morning the attack upon the bluffs was renewed, without resulting to the advantage of either side, and at night the vessels again withdrew, and retreated down the river. The Trenton returned to her old landing, and Frank, at his request, was again placed in command of one of the guns of the battery. But he was not destined to hold the position long, for, now that the "beauties" had dismounted that troublesome gun, General Sherman had advanced his works until he could go no further without getting into the enemy's line. At length, one morning, a flag of truce was raised within their fortifications, and hostilities were at once suspended. Then came that celebrated interview between the generals, during which the soldiers on both sides clambered out of the rifle-pits, and conversed face to face with the men with whom they had so long been engaged in deadly conflict.

"How are you now, Johnny?" inquired Frank, seating himself on one of the guns, and waving his hat to a rebel officer who stood in the rifle-pits, gazing at the battery with great interest. "What

does that flag of truce mean? Are you going to surrender?"

"Do n't know," replied the rebel; "but, I say, Yank, will you let a fellow come over there?"

"Certainly. Come on."

The rebel accordingly laid aside his weapons, and walked over to the battery, where, after examining the guns very curiously, he entered into conversation with Frank, in the course of which he informed him that they were a "played-out concern," and could not possibly hold out more than a week longer.

But they did not "hold out" so long; for, on the next day, the fourth of July, the victorious army entered the city, and raised the STARS AND STRIPES over the "SEBASTOPOL OF THE REBELS."

Here we leave our hero, reposing before Vicksburg on his well-earned reputation as a gallant young officer, waiting to be ordered to new scenes of excitement and danger further down the Mississippi and up her tributary streams. Through these scenes we shall conduct our readers in a concluding volume, which will close Frank's career on our Western waters.

THE END.

RARE BOOK
COLLECTION



THE LIBRARY OF THE
UNIVERSITY OF
NORTH CAROLINA
AT
CHAPEL HILL

Wilmer
454

